

PRLOGUE TO MY FINAL BOOK-PROTECT GOD

The literary industry today seems to be almost exclusively dedicated to volumes by ex-Presidents and government officials who write about the fiasco in Iraq, praising or criticizing our current administration. Publishers show no interest in books about God unless they conform to the biblical version of organized religion. This work deals with a unique concept of our Creator and presents startling evidence that is seldom, if ever, mentioned by men of the cloth.

For my prior book, an autobiography called "WINCH", Dr. Henry Heimlich, creator of the Heimlich maneuver, graciously wrote the introduction. For my book, "Ventriloquism For Fun and Profit", my good friend David Copperfield likewise honored me with his introduction. However, due to the current state of the world-with its fundamentalism, holy wars, suicide bombers and terrorism-existence has become so precarious that I could find no one with courage enough to put his name on this work. Therefore I shall have to supply the introduction myself.

I began writing this book a long time ago but I've been reluctant to release it because no one relishes being vilified by his society. You will soon discover why I feel trepidation in deciding to publish it now but since I'm well past eighty, and will undoubtedly leave this veil of tears soon, I'd better do it while I can or I may never do it at all. It is my contention that no other invention of man has brought greater chaos to humanity than the practice of religion. It has been the cause of more fear, bloodshed and hatred among peoples by dividing the human race into separate camps. "We are all God's children", each creed professes but their dogmas contradict that premise and cause men to distrust-often kill-one another, all in the name of God.

As a prelude to this book I would like to state some lesser known facts about several outstanding figures that I feel is appropriate to mention at this time: George Washington, the father of our country and a revered General, Thomas Jefferson-our nation's second President, Benjamin Franklin-brilliant inventor and trusted statesman and Thomas Paine-a British subject who co-authored our Constitution. These great men practiced the faith of Deism, as did others that came to the "the new world" to escape religious

persecution in England and parts of Europe. All of them acknowledged the existence of God through their simple and pure religion of Deism.

They established a new republic in this land based upon separation of the world's two great powers, Church and State, so that neither would infringe upon the other. The document they wrote became the cornerstone of our democracy but their faith failed to survive, ultimately being eclipsed by the same religion from which many had fled, namely the Judaic-Christian ethic.

Why did the faith of the men who framed our revered Constitution fail to fare as well as the document itself? What drove the early settlers of America to retreat to their "Holy Bible" and abandon the belief of our founders? Since all the Bibles of the world contradict each other and recognize different deities, Deism offered a viable alternative. No longer was there a need for multiple concepts of who or what God is. All that was required of each human being is to simply use his five senses and observe the magnificent Creation of our maker. No Deist ever engaged in a holy war against any other group, none experienced the fear of punishment after death and in the Deistic creed it is impossible for anyone to be an Atheist. All these men revered the power and majesty of the Almighty without the need for tenets or dogma, and most of all- they protected and honored God's sacred name. You are about to discover that most other faiths do not follow that example.

Should you happen to notice frequent repetition throughout this work, the redundancy is intentional. Modern faiths likewise, reinforce their message in men's minds by the use of constant repetition.

PROTECT GOD

-What the Bible Actually Says About God-

Including a Short Play by the Author, "Trial of the Apostles"

By Dr. Paul Winchell

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PREFACE
WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK
By Dr. Paul Winchell

Many readers may have heard of me, either as an entertainer or perhaps as an inventor. When I started inventing, many years after I was established as a television performer and ventriloquist, people often wondered why I was indulging in such a vastly different type of activity as inventing. Now that I am focusing on questions of theology, I imagine my current interest will bring even more questions.

The reason I have embarked on this endeavor is because I care. I care about the world and I care about my fellow man. I care that he escapes from the psychological and intellectual traps that deprived me of a happy childhood and marred my adult life with chronic fears and doubts. My happiness, in many ways, was jeopardized by a flawed, religious upbringing in which the threat of divine retribution and eternal damnation was drummed into me by an angry, demanding parent.

Despite that, my life has been quite successful and I've accomplished much of what I originally set out to do. I enjoyed a twenty-year television career as a ventriloquist with my alter egos Jerry Mahoney and Knucklehead Smiff. I made a lot of movies, appeared on most top television shows, created and performed the voice of "Tigger" for almost thirty years at Disney Studios, invented and patented the first successful Artificial heart used in humans and developed many other inventions currently in use including the disposable razor. Still, during much of my adult life, I began to dwell on the question of my own happiness and the happiness and well-being of mankind in general. The study of religion and religious philosophy began to take up more and more of my interest and time.

I finally came to the conclusion that superstition and fundamentalism in Western religion contributed major psychological aberrations in many people's lives and is an affront to the concept of a benevolent Creator. Yet, millions fail to perceive this paradox until they are confronted with the practices and books of organized religion. Gradually, I began to see that there was a religion beyond the Bible and that, in fact, the Bible produced major obstacles to understanding and respecting the Creator and His creations. I began to understand the wisdom in the writings of our Founding Fathers, like Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, who practiced the simple, logical faith of the Deist and incorporated that view into a government that strove to bring men liberty and happiness in their daily lives.

The literal, fundamentalist view of the Creator, as depicted in the Old and New Testament, presents a portrait of a jealous, wrathful and irrational God, a God that very few people who have experienced a pious religious upbringing ever truly examine. As I shall show in this work, the Scriptural view of our Creator actually deprives him of the goodness and truthfulness that men pay homage to in their speech and prayerful moments. It presents an image constructed over many years by a grasping and dictatorial priesthood; whose agenda was to create God in its own image, an image designed to inflict tyrannical control over men's minds and hearts in order to control their actions and behavior for selfish, personal motives. The priesthood in all cultures and in all ages has often been motivated by that same objective. I find, therefore, that I must now take a stand and speak out against *any* denegation of God, Our Father, and hope to bring people back to the simple, true and honest picture of God's natural residence in their hearts and thoughts.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS GOD'S TRUE IMAGE?

It is the duty of every human being to recognize the existence of his Creator, *whatever* he envisions that awesome power to be. Yet, the human race has evolved believing that God can be found in a book. Almost every religion today uses its own book to worship the Almighty and each identifies God by a different name. While everyone has the right to his own opinion on this subject, my primary interest deals with the "Holy Book" of western religion.

Millions of sincere worshippers go to their churches completely unaware that the book they use to honor God does the opposite. It may surprise many to learn that the Bible accuses our Creator of unspeakable atrocities against mankind and defames his sacred image, but since we invest much of ourselves in worshipping a Heavenly Father, shouldn't we be sure that the book designed to honor Him accomplishes that objective? It should portray a Supreme Being of the highest ethical and moral character for man to emulate. Instead, a painstaking investigation of the Bible reveals that Scripture maligns God by libelous charges that denigrate both His character and morality.

Let me begin by defining what God must be, if he exists, and precisely what he stands for. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "God" as "A being conceived as the perfect, omnipotent,

omniscient originator and ruler of the universe, the principal object of faith and worship in monotheistic religions.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines God as “the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshiped as Creator and ruler of the universe.” The Catholic Glossary defines God as “The infinitely perfect Supreme Being, uncaused and absolutely self-sufficient, eternal, the Creator and final end of all things.” Of the myriad definitions of God, the term, *perfect* and *Supreme Being*, are used the world over. God is generally regarded as being good, meaning that God is kind, wise, patient, loving, just, merciful, and compassionate. To me, that description exemplifies the true meaning of God.

Although not considered an *organized* religion, Deism is nonetheless devoutly faithful to the belief in the existence of God. I am a Deist mainly because I cannot accept the depiction of God in Genesis. First, because there is no room in my mind to conceive of God being so livid at the disobedience of his first two innocent creations, Adam and Eve, that he brings death into the world as punishment. How could either of them have known better being created without any past experience? Second, it seems to me utter nonsense that his “mercy” in forgiving their mistake could result in the type of solution that organized Christianity presents; in order to forgive the pair’s horrible crime of eating an “apple”, God must sacrifice his only son and have him bear unspeakable torture in order to forgive their “terrible” sin?

How can punishing an innocent redeem the guilty? The Deist must see this depiction of God in Genesis as almost bordering on Atheism, since He is behaving overwhelmingly unfair. After all, did God not contribute to Adam and Eve’s infraction by planting the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden? To me this act of “redemption” seems a sophisticated and deceptive form of animal sacrifice and atonement carried out on a cosmic scale.

After examining this myth, a Deist would have to reject it as an unjust account of our Heavenly Father. He would not direct his efforts to worship a god who indulges in such inscrutable mysteries that play havoc with God’s true nature. He would be too busy admiring God’s handiwork to be concerned with unraveling these blatantly offensive Scriptural fantasies. Instead he would ponder the key question, “How can anyone expect to know God without first comprehending his works?” We are fortunate today to be in possession of knowledge that was denied our early forebears. No prior culture could have created a mythology that would *personify* the god we are about to meet, because no other culture

was capable of examining the universe, as we have, or had the opportunity to view actual photographs of other worlds and galaxies.

It is time to end this injustice that's been going on for centuries and I've chosen to take a stand because I'm God's child and love my Father. I should say Our Father for we are all God's children and I've spent a great part of my life learning about Our Creator and the meaning He holds for people everywhere. I will protect that sacred image by challenging every unjust accusation against His character and morality *wherever* such charges are encountered, even if cherished beliefs are inadvertently trampled upon.

I will now begin my presentation by discussing the *concept* called "God" that every one of us carries in our minds, sometimes with considerable variations, depending usually upon our parents' beliefs and practices-beliefs that we often carry through our own lives. We start out by identifying with our parents' concept of God and some of us perhaps modify that, based on our experience and reflection. But ultimately, we deal with our fellow man as though he carries the same image of God that we do. In most societies, this image is depicted in a Holy Book or Scripture. In Western civilization this book is the Bible.

Now, what would happen if the image that one held was not the image found in Scripture? In most cases "the faithful" would brand any individual following the Deistic faith as an Atheist. Still, one must consider the validity of that accusation. After all, the Deist is not rejecting the concept of God, but rather embracing it wholeheartedly. If one is truly honest, the question that should arise is not whether the Deist is an Atheist or a non-believer, but rather- "is it wrong to believe in a God that is not found in the Bible"?

Many believers seem to have no problem with adherents of other faiths, even though their sacrosanct beliefs are vastly different. I suspect that they can afford to be tolerant in those cases because the faithful believe that that other faiths worship a myth while our Deity is the only true God. After all, do not all believers feel that they alone are right, regardless of which religion they follow throughout the world?

My religion of Deism is actually more fundamental to our common heritage in the United States than any other. Perhaps some of you are not familiar with this faith but suffice to say that the framers of our treasured Constitution were Deists. Our Founding Fathers

passionately believed in the existence of God and paid homage to our Creator by that simple religion. I use the word simple because the essence of its creed is straightforward and devoid of myth. If these brilliant statesmen created the document that spawned this great democracy of ours, it seems odd to me that their faith failed to persist.

Christianity was flourishing at the time as was Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, but our forebears needed no greater example of God's omnipotence than that which could be found in Creation itself. These men had no need for scriptural narratives or flights of fantasy, no threats of punishment or promised rewards. The very heart of their creed can be summed up in one brief sentence: "We can know God only by His works". Any thinking person on this planet, regardless of faith, can readily observe all the power and glory of God's incomprehensible Creation. This religion called Deism pays the deepest respect to the maker of the universe, a wonder of countless worlds and galaxies.

Why then, did this simple vision of reality seem to capture the minds of our founding fathers and leave the majority of mankind clinging to dogma and fable? Could the answer be that Deists had weak and squeamish stomachs? Being a Deist myself convinces me that they could not accept a God who creates the first two humans without any past experience, then punishes them so harshly by making women "bring forth their babies in pain" and men "toil endlessly by the sweat of their brows"-just for eating a piece of fruit. And as an added penalty, allowing death to enter the world because of it, thereby decreeing that every form of future life must die.

Apparently still, not satisfied, this Biblical god decides he must destroy everything he created and like a child playing with his toys, spawns a great flood and drowns every living thing in order to start all over again. Once that is accomplished, and still fuming over the fruit incident, He resolves the problem by having a virgin bear his son and plans to sacrifice the boy later in life in order to forgive *all* men for what the first two humans did. But since He is God-and his Son is also God-so in effect, He murders Himself and causes endless human guilt and suffering over the consequence.

But the Son comes back to life three days later in the same body made of the same flesh. That's not really experiencing death at all, is it? It's more like an experiment. I'll bet that any one of us, if given an iron clad *guarantee* to come back the same way, would jump at the chance to try it just to find out what's on the other

side. We could visit the Hereafter like on a vacation, assured in the knowledge that we'd return in three days good as new. I would sign up for that trip tomorrow!

But let's put all that aside for the moment and picture this world as it existed *before* Jesus lived- even before Moses who claimed he met that same God face to face. There was a world before that, you know, and before Rome as well, where Jesus met his fate. This old globe had been spinning for eons before religion was even conceived. Primitive beliefs, prior to the so-called "Great World Religions" were very pagan, but their stories were so similar to those of organized religions that we could assume they were interpreting the world the same way. These pagan religions frequently spoke of gods that came down from heaven and sired children with earth women to create what they called "the sons of God".

But in this journey of discovery we have embarked upon, I want to travel back even farther in time to when man first stood up erect and began to dwell in caves. I'm heading towards the Jurassic prehistoric, pre-human times when enormous eating machines that we call dinosaurs freely roamed this planet. I'm sure no one will deny that God was also there at the time. In fact, He's always been there. Perhaps this journey might make us realize that humans are not God's finest achievement—it is only man's ego that deludes him into thinking so. Upon deeper reflection we may realize that he is possibly one of the *worst since* no other creature has caused such havoc to God's earth. No other creature has created such pollutants nor embarked on a campaign of over population that may eventually deplete Earth's resources and lead to cannibalism or destroy the planet itself. Now that man has reached Mars with dreams of colonization and conquest, perhaps Mankind will eventually care even less about this world.

It is almost impossible to relate to the mindset of our ancestors during antiquity. They lived in a completely different world, at a time when Superstition was rampant and humanity had not yet emerged from the Dark Ages. Society consisted then of The Church and Monarchy. The average citizen operated a fief and had to share his product with land Barons. Still, we should be tolerant of the beliefs they held. After all, our forebears had no Science, no telescopes and no astronauts to send back photographs of other planets; no satellites or computers, and they had no knowledge of dinosaurs that, had they been aboard Noah's Ark, would have sunk that craft in a heartbeat. They also believed that a man could

survive in the belly of a fish. So please- let's be tolerant of the concepts they made for they never even saw the land upon which they dwelt; not even a view from a helicopter was available nor a jet, the Shuttle and definitely not a Space Station of today's technology." Yes, it would be many centuries before Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldren would photograph our home from the moon.

We live in a totally different world today than that of our more primitive ancestors, with new knowledge and inventions. How can we expect them to have thought any differently then they did? When they became ill and death seemed imminent, it was understandable and perfectly *reasonable* for them to pray to a god in their feelings of helplessness. Without medical science, they either got well or they died, often depending on nothing more than a Shaman's herbs or magic. Now things are different. We can receive a new heart and lungs, kidneys and liver transplants and we can do it without prayer or supplication. No such option existed during their day so the image of a caring god who might help them get well became a psychological necessity. Currently, even the Pope seeks medical aid for his Parkinson condition rather than rely on prayer alone. In the modern world, we see nothing immoral about combining prayer and science.

We may not give it a thought but many phenomena of the universe, formerly conceived as being under God's personal direction, have now been relegated to the commonplace. Television weathermen show us satellites tracking weather systems hourly. It's freezing in New York and sweltering in Miami; people are dying from tornadoes in the mid west, but all is sunny and calm in California. Floods devastate Europe and Asia while reports tell us that droughts are destroying crops in the farmlands. Newscasters report earthquakes worldwide and announce meteor showers inviting us outdoors to watch Lunar and Solar eclipses, elements of nature formerly considered to be omens from God. The terrified populace used to read warnings into every disaster, "Behave or the world will come to an end." Today, thanks to scientific research, much of the fear has evaporated with rational explanations for natural catastrophes. Without our current knowledge, it was completely natural for earlier civilizations to turn to "the gods" for assistance. It would have been inconceivable if they had not.

The amazing fact is that many people still share the views of antiquity. It's as if the older an idea is, the more valid it becomes. That is the greatest paradox of the ages. This antiquated concept obliterates the value of experience and history, in moving forward from superstition and mythology to basing belief on reason,

experiment and experience- the defining aspects of a truly advanced civilization. As one example, sometimes history has looked at it as though it were part of an inevitable cosmic cycle, like the meticulously calibrated cycles of the Mayans, whose cycles lasted as long as 93 to 403 million years and whose calendar, strangely ends on December 21, 2012 (if I live till then I will be 90 on that very day). Or the Hindu conception of the Kali Yuga, the dark part of history in which our Modern godless times appear to fall. A more typically Western variation on this type of idea is to believe that all bad things that happen are part of a Biblical prophetic cycle regarding the end of the world. What many fail to understand is that natural catastrophes happen without *intent*.

With all the crime and wars that go on, the events of 9-11, the sniper attacks, the suicide bombers that murder innocent people, those horrible nightclub fires, the Shuttle disasters and the students that shoot classmates and teachers, perhaps it is time to accept the things that are truly out of human control instead of consigning them to the fantasies of an ancient, scientifically illiterate past.

Human beings, fortunately or not, function somewhat like computers. We create a type of mental filing system for everything that we consider important. When we “save” those files, they continue to run automatically. Unfortunately, we can’t delete them as easily as our silicon counterparts.

At this moment, the human mind is far more complex than any cybernetic memory bank. Nonetheless, it’s functioning is very similar. We start our lives by “scanning” our parents and “saving a copy” of their values, attitudes, prejudices and religious beliefs, which become part of our “subconscious”. Another way of describing the process is, continual parental “suggestions,” reinforce their beliefs over a child’s life, producing a form of hypnosis. Every parent hypnotizes his child to a certain extent and whether intentional or not, it creates a post-hypnotic influence that can affect their children subliminally for the rest of their lives.

CHAPTER ONE

THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD’S CHARACTER UNVEILED

In total honesty, I must confess that I know nothing about God through direct experience- only through deduction, through the careful examination of his creations. In my opinion, no one truly knows God directly, not even the Clergy. And what’s more, they

know that they don't know. Yet, the Clergy, which grounds its authority on a Book that demands one to believe or else, convince themselves that they alone possess true knowledge. While they also admit that God is unknowable, they base their assertions on the concept that faith is superior to knowledge, particularly faith in Scripture. And I'm sure that most of them honestly believe what they profess. But they also do something else that profoundly disturbs me—they fail to tell their congregations the truth about the way God is portrayed in the Bible. Even though they seem to agree that God is kind, wise, patient, loving, just, merciful, and compassionate, they ignore the sections that depict the Father as the very opposite. "He is more perfect than the most perfect man" they preach, but their scripture does not present a supremely benevolent Creator, the fountain of justice and wisdom, the author of human liberty, the sanctifier of human freedom.

According to the Bible, all of God's laws come to us from one man named Moses Levi. Moses was well over one hundred years of age when he trekked through the desert leading a tribe of Hebrews known as the Levites. Scripture tells us that he remained on Mount Sinai forty days and forty and nights without food or water as God wrote the Ten Commandments. Still, when he finally came down he wasn't too weak to smash those commandments in a fit of rage. Those that believe these passages must also accept that the leader of a wandering band of Jews chatted "face to face" with the Almighty on a number of occasions. Even the Pope who leads over a million Catholics has never made such a claim. The Bible further states that the Ten Commandments, and other "laws" that are scrupulously observed by both Jews and Gentiles alike, were handed over personally by God to one man to teach his tribe. Believers without question have accepted this story for four thousand years.

While the Clergy is highly respected in most societies, many people have no idea that Moses was responsible for their existence. During antiquity, Moses had to act as judge and jury in solving problems for his tribes. Seeing him so overworked, his father-in-law, Jethro, suggested that he empower other tribal leaders as judges to relieve him of some of the load. Voila! That's how the Clergy was born. As we begin to realize that it was Moses alone who gave us all of God's laws, perhaps we may see "men of the cloth" in a different light. Clergymen enjoy a unique position in society and they will be with us as long as we continue to believe a one hundred and twenty seven year old man named Moses Levi. However, by today's standards Moses might be judged quite differently. He murdered three thousand members of his own tribe

in one afternoon for worshipping the Golden Calf. Of course he claimed that God had ordered him to do it.

My main disagreement with Clergy's concept of the Almighty is that it dramatically conflicts with the image of God depicted in their Holy Bible, creating ethical, social and even political confusion and resulting in great disharmony. After all, since 911, a vast number of mankind's existence is seriously challenged by Fundamentalist views that seek to wreak havoc or exterminate their opponents. It is therefore vital to examine the image of God that is depicted in the Bible, as opposed to the one jointly held by the faithful and by myself, namely that God is caring, compassionate, wise and good.

There are numerous, scurrilous affronts to the Almighty's character and morality appearing in the "Holy Bible"-a book that is supposed to venerate Our Creator not defame Him. My intention in writing this book is to protect God, to protect that sacred image and the sanctity of his name.

Imagine, if you will, that the people who wrote and edited the Bible were brought before a Court of Justice and charged with defaming the Lord. They would be accused of libelous charges and statements in writing that not only denigrated the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, but accused God of heinous acts by causing, or sanctioning, mass murder, incest, slavery, cruel and unusual punishment, exploitation of women, racism, etc. The trial would undoubtedly be watched by most of Mankind as the defendants answered the prosecutor and strove to prove their innocence.

Well, I am that prosecutor. And I accuse the writers and editors of our current "Holy Book" of defaming God and converting a good and just Deity into a virtual cosmic criminal, a Being of undeniable cruelty, jealousy, paranoia, favoritism towards certain individuals and groups, and malicious injustice. I will prove, beyond a shadow of doubt, that this is exactly how God is portrayed in the Bible, a sad commentary on western religion that has distorted history. I leave open for investigation that the original texts may have been significantly different than the canon of the Bible which was formulated through history by the various Clerical Councils of the Church; the first one being the Council of Nicea, a council that was overseen and orchestrated by the Roman Emperor, Constantine.

Let's bravely look at the God of the Old Testament and his attitude towards mass murder, adultery, rape and animal sacrifice not only

in the Ten Commandments but also in the alleged “true narratives” of that “holy” book.

THE ULTIMATE GENOCIDE
-GOD CREATES DEATH AS A PUNISHMENT-

In the world of the Bible, Eden is clearly a place of physical immortality. Since death didn't exist in Eden, of course, murder couldn't exist. The Bible states that because the first two humans disobeyed God, He brought death into the world.

In bolder terms, God murdered Adam and Eve and everyone else that followed them. He condemned the entire human race to death in perpetuity- presumably because the first two took a bite out of the “forbidden” fruit. Whether it was an apple or not- or perhaps it represented some other sin (such as fornication), the result produced intentional death for billions to follow. The key crime was, of course, *disobedience*. But the actual nature of the infraction is obscured by the natural tendency of theologians to *speculate* that the act of Adam and Eve may have transcended eating a simple fruit.

The Garden of Eden episode begins on a very tender note. All the animals are friendly; the lion lies down with the lamb and everything is so loving, until God plants the “The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” in the midst of the garden. When the two newly created humans eat the fruit of it, God becomes enraged and puts a curse upon their heads. He vows that henceforth man will toil by the sweat of his brow and woman will bring forth her young in pain. The authors of the Bible added that because of this one infraction, death entered the world. We have all heard that Adam and Eve caused “Original Sin” and yet from these first two humans came all of subsequent humanity. Can it be that incest and interbreeding are not as evil as eating fruit? Those who believe that Adam and Eve sired the entire world's population usually shrug and say, “Well, how else could they do it in those days”?

Five million year old fossils clearly show that creatures have always died and always will. Death is a natural appointment that all must keep--merely nature acting without *intent*. God never created death as a punishment anymore than he caused women to bring forth their babies in pain, as Scripture claims. Every creature experiences discomfort during birth and the good Lord is not that heartless. It is simply an Act of Nature. Do we have to blame it on God, as though it were a perpetual punishment? The

Old Testament maligns the meaning of a loving God and deprives us of a healthy image of our Creator. There is no doubt in my mind that Scripture defames the nature of God.

TWO VERSIONS OF CREATION

Scripture not only insults God, it also bears a good deal of responsibility for the difficulty that women have encountered in trying to achieve equality with males. This becomes evident the moment we begin to read the Old Testament. The book of Genesis chronicles the arrival of man. After creating the universe, The Lord creates Adam and Eve *simultaneously* and gives them *equal* dominion over the earth. So far it looks like Creation is off to a wonderful start. But then it quickly becomes apparent that different writer has taken over because this author now tells the story of Creation all over again with quite a few changes.

That's peculiar enough but whoever is now writing the text has a very different slant on things. The first version of Creation seemed eminently fair to both sexes but now things begin to change. This time Adam is created first and Eve is treated as an afterthought. She's not even created the same way that he was, this time Eve is fashioned from one of Adam's ribs. This seems to make her a part of man and not a separate entity in her own right. Jehovah Himself, even says, "I shall call her wo-man because she was taken out of man". He announces that henceforth, her duty shall be to her husband. If it weren't for that second writer, women might have been spared a lot of grief. We all know the rest of the story, Adam blames Eve for making him eat the "apple" (which many scholars believe is symbolic for copulation) and now all of mankind will have to suffer on her account. And so, Eve becomes the scapegoat for "Original Sin" because her husband was too chicken to accept some of the responsibility. Because of this infraction, Jesus, who is not even born yet, will now have to be sacrificed in order to forgive mankind for Eve's "Sin". Shall we conclude that God is a chauvinist or is it more likely that the Bible writers were anti-female? Besides, if God had anything to do with writing the Bible why would He give two different versions of Creation? And come to think of it, Adam and Eve weren't really responsible at all because the Bible introduces a Hebrew snake that coerces the humans to "eat the apple".

Note: We find another example of gender discrimination occurring as rules are spelled out about what is considered "clean" and "unclean" by Biblical standards.

When a woman gives birth, she is “unclean” and must leave the village and live on the outskirts until once again she becomes “clean”. If the child is a male, she must remain away for one week. If the child is a female, she must stay outside the village for *two* weeks. Of course the writers claim that God ordered this discrimination. I’m aware that a great taboo existed against blood at the time but is there any difference with either sex following the birth of a child?

The Old Testament treats men with respect while women are frequently referred to as harlots and whores. Patriarchs are lauded but very few females are given admirable status in scriptural narratives. Delilah betrays the beloved Samson by having his eyes put out. Cunning Salome orders the decapitation of John the Baptist. Males that meander receive no Divine punishment but wives that are declared unfaithful are taken into the village and stoned to death. These are just a few examples of lady Icons that appear in the Bible. In fact, one sparkling “role model” of the Old Testament is Jael, heralded as a heroine and praised for the brutal murder of a tribal enemy. After seducing him she waits until he falls asleep on her lap. Then she drives a long spike into his temple.

The highly prized females of the Old Testament always seem to be the virgins. Whenever the armies of Moses conquer a city, they kill all the men, women and children and spare only the virgins. Moses tells his army that “God ordered it” that way for the soldiers. As Moses lay dying, at one hundred and twenty seven years of age, his ministers gather together the most beautiful virgins in the land to dance around his deathbed in the vain hope of reviving him. Try as he may, the Bible reports, quote: “Moses could gat no heat” unquote.

Perhaps one of the worst slights to females is barely noticed, occurring in the most revered tenet of religion, “The Ten Commandments”. The tenth commandment reads, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife nor his house, his servants, his ox, his ass, nor any *thing* that is thy neighbor’s”. With one brief sentence the Bible reduces woman to a piece of property. Passages like these have undoubtedly played a role in depriving women of the equality they have always sought and truly deserve. Common sense should tell us that the good Lord had nothing to do with this slight to the ladies, but Common sense is not very common.

THE FIRST CURSE

CAIN AND ABEL

We now encounter the first premeditated murder in the world, which happens to be the very first murder in the Bible. The story goes like this, according to the King James Bible, as it appears in Genesis, Chapter 4: 2-6.

“And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.”

God very sternly tells Cain that his inadequate offering did not measure up to Abel's best of his flock and warns him that “sin” will “lay at his door” if he does not do better. In a fit of jealous rage Cain then goes out and kills his brother. Is it possible that God was unaware of sibling rivalry?

But wait. God then puts a mark upon Cain to protect him and swears vengeance on anyone that tries to kill the lad. In all seriousness, would God make such a statement when only three people exist in the world? Did he think that Adam and Eve would try to kill their only son? And why should God need to protect him anyway? Cain can't reproduce unless he has sex with his mother or with his sister. But Cain has no sister. However, there is a minority of the faithful who believe in some kind of pre-Adamic race so perhaps they can explain some of this, but fundamentalists accept that at this point in time, there were only three people in the world, and two of them are Cain's parents.

The writer sure let that one get away from him didn't he because who's left to slay Cain? The real issue is would the Lord even take part in such a foolish conversation in the first place? Is this not an insult to Our Father's intelligence? As the story continues, Cain is driven out of Eden by Jehovah and goes to live in the “Land of Nod” where he meets a nice girl and starts a family. Where did all these other people come from? Again, we have to stretch the Biblical account for this to make any sense.

In this Biblical story God curses Cain so that he can no longer till the Earth, but at least his life is spared.

NOAH AND THE ARK
-A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY-

Not only did God bring death into the world but, according to the Bible, he was generous in his use of it, often destroying men, women and children in divine action. Perhaps no weapon of mass destruction is greater than the one described as “The Great Flood,” a kindly little parable often featured in Biblical coloring books, with quaint pictures of the Ark and cute little animals, but even they were victims of God’s fury. The good book claims that God drowned every living thing--even the fishes?

In Genesis, we are told that the great flood destroyed everything on Earth. After creating billions of galaxies in seven days, God was dissatisfied with the outcome. Scripture says he felt that humans were inherently evil and the land corrupt. Displeased with mankind, and the animals as well, he claimed that “all flesh” was evil. He grieved with remorse and claimed he was sorry he had created man. He ordered Noah, who was six hundred years old at the time, to build an ark that would hold two of each species. Then God unleashed the worst deluge in history and drowned every form of life. The words used by the Biblical authors in describing God’s rage are chilling and make the Lord seem like a monster. “I will destroy all life that is in the land. All in whose nostrils is the air of life, etc.” The words are terrifying, especially when the Bible tells us that God uttered them.

Note: Since no Bible writers were around during that flood and no one alive today was there either, shouldn’t we give God the benefit of the doubt and use common sense? Isn’t any evidence required of the authors who write these tales? Elephants had to come from Africa, tigers from India, Kangaroos from Australia and Pandas from China but apparently they made the journey or they wouldn’t be here today. One hundred and twenty-five thousand different animals exist on earth and both the Queen Mary and new Queen Elizabeth Ocean liners couldn’t hold them but Noah’s little craft carried two of each safely through the storm. At this point, some of you may be tempted to become cynical about these tales but before doing so, please remember that our ancestors were not in possession of the knowledge that we have today.

INCEST

We have already noted the biblical implication that the entire earth's population must have been created through incest, unless there were humans on Earth before Adam and Eve.

In two huge cities of Sodom Gomorra, the Bible tells us that God could find only one righteous man. His name is Lot. God is so furious that Lot is the only one without Sin that He goes on a rampage, setting both cities ablaze. and all the men, women and children burn to cinders. Does that sound like something God would do or something Adolph Hitler did or Sadam Hussein, and is this man Lot really worth saving? Since God believes he is, it must be so, right? Then, in another inexplicable act, God turns Lot's wife into a pillar of salt for looking back at the fire.

The Lot family is now faced with a dilemma, according to Scripture. They may want to continue the family name, but Mom's dead. Faced with this dilemma, Lot's two daughters find an interesting way to perpetuate their little family. They get Pop drunk and both of them get pregnant by him. That must be okay with God since He believes that these people are the only righteous ones without sin in both cities. After all, Lot's daughters are only violating prohibitions against incest, which is taboo in most religions and tribes of the world, except, of course, in the Bible. Could this story truly reflect God's actions or intentions? I hope it's becoming clear now why I defend the *meaning* of God against the vilification of His intelligence and morality.

A COVENANT OF MURDER ABRAHAM'S SUPREME TEST

Jehovah's propensity for killing was not confined exclusively to massive efforts. He was extremely capable of acting in very personal ways as well. The following story is not really about murder, but it demonstrates a *willingness* to commit murder. It would have been a most unjust requirement of God's servant, particularly God's greatest servant. In this case, fortunately, the murder did not occur but notice the motive behind God's actions. Even in the Ten Commandments, allegedly handed to Moses, the greatest human sin is considered to be murder because of its irrevocable nature. Often times, this mandate against killing excludes acts of, self-defense and warfare. But it is clear to all who interpret the Bible that the killing of an *innocent* is clearly wrong.

Yet, it is that very act of murder, that God demands of Abraham, a horrible action perpetrated against a totally innocent child,

Abraham's son Isaac. You will recall that Abraham received the *first* sacred covenant ever made by God, thus becoming one of the greatest Patriarchs of the Hebrew faith.

Although Abraham has always proven his loyalty to the Lord, God decides to put him through a cruel and heartless test. Abraham's little boy is the pawn in this drama that pits a father's love for God against that of his only child. Though Abraham had done everything the Lord asked of him, even circumcised himself on Jehovah's command, Jehovah still seems uncertain of his loyalty. He orders Abraham to bring Isaac to a sacred sacrificial altar and murder him there. Agonizing over the deed he must perform, Abraham brings Isaac to the appointed spot and prepares to slay him before God. The child is petrified as his father raises the dagger overhead. Just as he is about to plunge the blade into the lad, God stops the test by revealing that He did it because He only wanted to be sure how much Abraham loved him.

Who will choose to believe that the Lord is so insecure that He must torment his most devoted servant in such a heartless manner? Does this behavior sound like the Creator of the Universe or that of an immature schoolboy? Ask yourselves if this story doesn't defame God's image?

Are we to believe that God would ask his servant to commit the very act he is shown to despise, the very cornerstone of Jewish and Christian teaching? Abraham is asked to perform the most heinous act, the murder of an innocent, his own son, in order to prove his love for God. In other words, this Biblical god wants his servants to be willing to kill innocents to prove their worth. Not even the cruelest college fraternity demands this extremity from its petitioners. Only the most extreme religious cults, the very cults despised by Fundamentalist religion. Yet, despite what we have just read, God will eventually murder his own Son in a gesture of forgiveness.

HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART -MURDER IN EGYPT-

In the book of Moses called Exodus, Moses pleads with the Egyptian Pharaoh to "Let my people go" but before the King can respond God "hardens his heart". This ambiguous phrase makes one wonder if the Pharaoh is really responsible for what he does.

In a biblical example of magic, Moses throws down his staff and, lo, it becomes a snake. The Egyptian magicians do likewise but

when their staffs also turn into snakes, Moses' snake gobbles up all the others.

Again, Moses pleads for his people and each time the Pharaoh seems willing to release the Hebrews, once again God hardens his heart, making us wonder why does God keep doing that? The Bible doesn't explain it but God seems to have a strange relationship with Pharaoh whose refusal appears to be remotely controlled by the Almighty. Nevertheless, Jehovah becomes so angry at Pharaoh for having such a hard heart that He sends plagues of frogs, flies, lice and hail storms that destroy all vegetation, and swarms of locusts that devour whatever remains, thereby starving thousands of innocent Egyptian citizens. And does it seem fair that God should murder the first born of every Egyptian family, given that the Egyptians themselves are citizens of a cruel, tyrannical dictator? Is it the Pharaoh alone who is truly responsible for the slavery and abuses against the Hebrews since God continues to harden his heart??

Perhaps "hardening the heart" of Pharaoh is some kind of mis-translation, but, still, let's take a long, hard look at it. This story has been with us- since at least the creation of the King James Version of the Bible. And millions have believed it without even questioning God's motive.

The Bible blithely reports that while all these horrors were going on, everything in Goshen, where the Hebrew live, is calm and peaceful. Now God sends Moses to tell the Hebrews to slaughter a lamb and smear its blood on the door posts so He can recognize their homes that night when he will "pass-over" and kill all the Egyptian first born. Once that vile slaughter is done, though the king seems more willing than ever to comply, God hardens his heart again. Still not satisfied, God turns the Nile River and all the water in Egypt to blood, kills all their animals, destroys all the trees with more hail storms and, once again, the Bible repeats that all is well in Goshen where the Hebrew live. Unable to withstand any more, the Pharaoh releases the Hebrews and, as they prepare to depart, God tells Moses to order them to borrow gold, silver, jewels and raiment from their Egyptian neighbors and "despoil" them as they leave. "Despoil," according to the dictionary, means "to sack or to plunder." Are we now to believe that the Lord God commanded "Thou *Shalt* Steal?"

When, at last, the Pharaoh has conceded and the Jews have left Egypt and are now wandering aimlessly in the desert, what do you think God does? He re-hardens Pharaoh's heart to make him

chase after them. What possible reason could God have to act like a traitor and want to foil their escape? Were the writers setting the stage for the great miracle of parting the Red Sea? Not quite yet. They claim that God said he did it “to get honor upon the Egyptians so they will know I am the Lord.” Then God lets the Hebrews walk across the dry sea floor and closes the waters upon their pursuers- “to get honor upon them so they will know I am the Lord”. Why is that so vital that he must prove it? Doesn't He *know* that He's the Lord? Why does He have to go to such extremes just to feel secure that He is God? The answer to these questions is quite clear. You see, during antiquity people believed in many gods so the authors were attempting to depict a God that had eclipsed all the others by his power. But the character of the god that they created was undoubtedly more like the storytellers' than that of our Creator.

Thus far, does anyone besides me agree that this entire scenario is libeling the image of our Creator? Am I wrong or is this story not a blatant defamation of God's character and morality? Do the scripture writers present the Lord as a role model that will inspire worship?

GOD'S TREATMENT OF MOSES

After wandering in the desert for forty torturous years, Moses guides his tribe towards the land of milk and honey. God Himself leads the way taking the form of a pillar of clouds by day and a huge fire at night. The land of Canaan finally lies before them and as they prepare to enter, the Almighty tells Moses that he alone will not see the Promised Land. Moses may watch as his people go in, but he must stay behind because he failed to sanctify Jehovah's name to his tribe forty years earlier. Are we supposed to believe that God would be so cruel to his most devoted servant? Can anyone accept the belief that the Lord would hold a grudge for forty years just because Moses failed to sanctify His name before an exhausted band of wandering Jews? Truthfully, does the Bible endow Our Creator with admirable qualities befitting a god? To me it makes no sense that God would act so unjustly towards a man who unswervingly suffered greatly to save his people.

JOSHUA

We all know the tale that Joshua fought the battle at Jericho. The Bible tells us that his trumpeter blew three blasts on his horn and the walls came tumbling down. Then the text goes on to say that God joined the fight and hurled huge rocks down from Heaven,

killing more of Joshua's enemies with those rocks than Joshua's entire army combined. This is one of many implications in Scripture that clearly tell us that only certain groups qualify as God's children. So-called religious fundamentalists take it for granted that it is perfectly consistent with God's nature to choose one group over the rest. So, are we all God's children or not?

*HOW GOD "PUNISHES" HIS FAVORITES
-THE SINS OF DAVID-*

God has a peculiar way of treating his servants. Moses, Abraham and David were undoubtedly some of his favorites.

King David, whose symbol is the Jewish Star, watches Bathsheba sun bathing on her rooftop and has her brought to his palace where they carry on an adulterous affair. Upon learning that he has made her pregnant, he conspires to have her husband, Uriah, return from the war to sleep with his wife. Uriah is too devoted to His King and chooses instead to immediately return to the front lines. David then orders his Generals to place Uriah into the thick of battle and has the man slain. Now David can have Bathsheba all to himself and Jehovah is furious with him for what he's done. We now wait for divine retribution. And God does not fail to act according to His nature, as described in the Scriptures.

When the child is born, God punishes David and Bathsheba by killing their baby, plus seventy thousand of David's innocent subjects. The two adulterers receive no chastisement and Uriah's murder goes unpunished. Do the faithful truly believe that God would mete out this kind of justice for a diabolically premeditated crime? Is this even a vaguely human concept of justice? A man commits murder so the Court has all his family and friends executed instead of him. What would we call this kind of justice? What would happen to such a judge if he were brought before the Court at Nuremberg?

Is this type of mass murder acceptable because it appears in the Bible? No one may ever know who wrote this during antiquity, but we do know that millions believe it. And most of them claim to ascribe to my doctrine of God's goodness and compassion. In certain human courts, David might face execution or imprisonment for his actions. But would the judge, of any court, order a mass execution instead--including the poor innocent baby, the offspring of David's misguided love? We are talking about seventy thousand human beings. Should we just accept the word of this unknown author or, as I said before, shall we give God the

benefit of the doubt? If we believe that God is good, then this clearly never happened.

*A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS EXECUTED
FOR HIS ACT OF FIDELITY*

Uzzah is a pious slave who is very solicitous of God's laws. Despite his piety, one can see from this next story that God did not hesitate to punish him, no matter what Uzzah's intentions were. Among many of God's laws was the injunction that the Ark of the Covenant is most holy and must never be touched. One day, as Uzzah is following the procession, the Ark starts to topple. Instinctively, Uzzah grabs it to stop it from falling and God instantly sends forth a "holy fire" and immolates the poor slave. Is it logical that the Lord should kill a man for trying to save a most holy object? Is the Creator of the universe no more rational than that? Yes, let the punishment fit the crime but Uzzah was merely trying to save the Ark. It was an act of fidelity to protect divine property, if nothing else. If you had a neighbor with such a short fuse who murdered someone for a reason like that, what would you do? Someone would surely call the authorities and the perpetrator would be accused of murder, even if it were an act of passion or a psychotic episode of rage. Let's set aside, for the moment that it was the tabernacle itself that brought about the accident, we can never know because this fact has been buried by history. Whatever the truth of the incident is, the Bible clearly accuses God of having personally executed Uzzah.

THE DEUTERONOMY HORROR

In the fifth and final book of Moses called Deuteronomy, God again becomes so livid at man for being disobedient to Him that he let's go a barrage of the vilest curses imaginable. If you read Chapter 28 in its entirety and carefully, you will be shocked. All the plagues and failed harvests that He wishes for man, that will bring starvation and disease are bad enough, but in verse 53 Jehovah says, quote: "You shall eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and daughters". And in verse 57, "The young one that cometh from between her feet-and toward her children which she shall bear, she will eat them—that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD."

Eat her children? This is sheer blasphemy to put those words directly in God's mouth, and from the one book that was designed to honor and protect His image. These distasteful words destroy the most cherished symbol of mankind. A tyrannical, power mad,

dictator might feel such vindictive emotions but surely not a wise and loving God. Is it now becoming clearer why I deny that any deity described in this manner would be unworthy of the homage that man pays? So-called righteous people generally become enraged at the slightest affront to their Lord and yet they venerate a book that claims he uttered the words I've just quoted. It certainly is their right to believe these stories. But are they defending God?

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL CODE

It is common to assume that the foundation of Western morality and civilization is found in the Bible. But a careful inspection of its actual text reveals bizarre laws that prevailed during antiquity for the enforcement of social order. In this chapter, we will take a more careful look at the Ten Commandments, the Biblical rules on slavery and a few of the divine judgments proposed in the Old Testament. The laws and politics of the United States are the result of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights that were formulated by Deists, not literal interpreters of the Bible. For those of us who live in America, the contrast between Biblical and American justice can be very startling. First, let's take a look at the Ten Commandments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

At the very core of the Judaic-Christian Religion stands The "Ten Commandments." Almost one third of the world's population recognizes them as rules of moral behavior. For centuries Kings and Queens, as well as Popes, have abided by their authority. Both Jews and gentiles alike believe that Moses received them directly from God on Mount Sinai. The Bible claims that the Lord Himself wrote them in stone with His own finger. The Commandments have continued to wield a powerful influence over mankind throughout the course of history. Even Jesus Christ lived by their principles.

A thorough investigation of the Ten Commandments reveals some unusual discrepancies that may not have been explored before. I invite you to come along on an interesting journey and, if you have access to a Bible, why not follow my commentary to be sure that no liberties are taken with Biblical text? Let's begin with the second book of Moses entitled "Exodus".

Here we find the Hebrews being led out of Egypt by Moses. In Chapter 20: 1 through 17, the voice of the Lord is heard speaking

to the tribes of Israel. The sentence begins, “And God *spake* these words” etc. Notice that Jehovah speaks the Ten Commandments aloud, as they are known to the world. The Biblical word “spake” is significant because Scripture clearly tells us that God *spoke* the commandments for everyone to hear. You’ll recognize them as those that the Clergy has consistently taught.

Chapter 34, verses 1 through 28, finds Moses with God on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights without food and water. When Moses finally comes down, he finds his tribe worshipping the Golden calf. Since they had not heard a word from him in forty days, they had regressed in fear to the former religion of Egypt. Lacking all compassion for their ordeal, Moses smashes the set of tablets that God had given him. Please note that the following quote is *verbatim*.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the *first* tables which thou brakest.” God patiently supplies a duplicate set but when we read what He has written, it is completely different from the commandments that we all know! These are laws that deal with tribal morality, indigenous to the culture of that period. You can find them in Chapter 34 Verse 11 through 28 that begin: “Observe thou that which I command thee this day.” You may read the rest at your leisure but for now I offer a truncated version below:

Thou shalt make no molten gods.

Thou shalt worship no other God.

Thou shalt eat unleavened bread for the month thou camest out of Egypt.

Thou shalt not make covenants with inhabitants of the land lest thou go whoring after their gods.

Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest.

Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother’s milk.

Note: The above summary is *not* a verbatim quote because these passages contain far too many Commandments to list here.

Question: Which set of commandments would you consider carries greater authority, the ones that God *spoke* or those that he just gave to Moses? If my analysis is accurate, it would seem to indicate that the commandments which the Clergy has consistently taught for the last four thousand years are the wrong ones!! If you read them carefully, you will notice that these Commandments deal exclusively with an antiquated life style. These laws were extremely important to the tribes of Israel but have no relevance to modern life. At the time, a taboo existed prohibiting the making of covenants with strangers (aliens). And though one other Commandment may seem rather odd, it was considered highly immoral to cook a lamb in its own mother's milk. These are the commandments that God *wrote*.

To be certain that no error has been made, see "Deuteronomy" Chapter 10, verse 2. Here again God reaffirms that He will write the same words in the duplicate set that were in the original set which Moses broke.

The Biblical authors have certainly created a real dilemma for the faithful. How could such a discrepancy have gone unnoticed for so long? Since God clearly wrote two duplicate sets and the Clergy keeps quoting those that God *spoke*, which ones should we follow? How can we now determine what conduct is morally right and what behavior is morally wrong? The original purpose of God's laws was to define morality for mankind so how can we return to those sound family values that the Church always talks about, if we don't know what they are? It wasn't very long ago that our own government seriously considered posting the Ten Commandments in every school, classroom and workplace in America. Our leaders believed it would act as a catalyst to improve our moral values but which set would they have posted? The basic question that remains is this; did God create these Commandments or are they the product of Bible writers? Let's examine those Commandments that God *spoke* and evaluate them.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1st Commandment: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage".

Note: The Bible states that after the Jews were finally free, God hardened Pharaoh's heart again so he would chase after them. Does this not libel God as a traitor to the children of Israel and the Exodus?

2nd Commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness of anything that is in the heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water beneath. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my Commandments”.

Biblical authors have ascribed human frailty to God—qualities of weakness, hatred, rage, vengeance, jealousy, insecurity, and spite and even paranoia—qualities most degrading to the meaning of The Lord. It makes one wonder if God created man or has man created God? And can we imagine “The Father” becoming deeply disturbed over the making of images? How can the Catholics resolve this dilemma when their temples are filled with “graven images” depicting the events of Christianity? And notice that God is constantly jealous of other gods. Doesn’t the Almighty know that He is the only one? The Bible defames the Father by portraying Him as an extremely insecure, disturbed and even paranoid Supreme Being.

3rd. Commandment: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

I must confess ignorance on this one. How can a name be “taken in vain”? If I say “God bless you” am I taking Jehovah’s name in vain? If I say “God damn it” am I guilty of taking His name in vain? If I suddenly realize that DOG spelled backwards is GOD does that qualify to make me guilty?

4th Commandment: “Thou shalt keep the Sabbath Holy”.

Jewish people have gone to extremes to observe the fourth commandment. In order to comply, they have created a self-imposed impotence upon themselves. Many pious Jews scrupulously observe the dietary laws of keeping meat and dairy dishes separated. Some families own a second set of cutlery and flatware and never mix the two in order to keep them “kosher. Orthodox Jews must not light their stoves or ovens on the Sabbath. They generally arrange for a gentile friend or neighbor to ignite their appliances for them. They are not allowed to drive or use elevators on the Sabbath, which is very curious since neither

autos nor elevators existed in olden times. The taboo extends to a host of prohibitions that would otherwise be considered hardships. Perhaps the origin of these practices stems from a Biblical passage where a man was stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath. God is actually quoted as saying, "Whosoever does any work on the Sabbath shall be put to death". If we obeyed this one, what would that do to our economy?

Note: Extremely orthodox Jewish couples consider sex unclean and make love through a hole cut in the bed sheet. This fanatical observance takes place any day, Sabbath or otherwise. Would any god deign to sanction such a practice?

5th Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The fifth Commandment, "Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother" creates a multitude of difficulties. It's one thing to show respect for parents but quite another to legislate a child's emotions. Many parents should never have had children in the first place. They have no idea what a child is or what its needs are. In their ignorance, they frequently create life-long problems for their youngsters. This becomes obvious when headlines report children running away from home or even murdering their parents. Young girls frequently become pregnant because of parental reluctance to discuss sexual matters. Scripture bears some responsibility on this issue. It's incredible to realize that we are required to pass a competency test in order to drive a vehicle but need no instruction on how to raise a child.

6th Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill".

The sixth Commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill", presents a worthy sense of morality but extremists who bomb abortion clinics and kill its doctors readily circumvent this injunction by professing they are doing God's will. If the good Lord weren't constantly killing people in the Bible this Commandment might have more of an impact on mankind. But you know the old saying, "Do as I say not as I do."

7th Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

No comment on this one because the Bible contains so much adultery and rape, that it's a case of the pot calling the kettle

black. What's more, it's no business of scriptural writers to pry into the affairs of men or blame these practices on God.

8th Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal."

The eighth law "Thou shalt not steal" is universally accepted because nobody relishes losing his possessions. However, God Himself ordered the Hebrews to "despoil" the Egyptians of gold, silver, precious stones, perfumes and incense and use all the booty in the construction of His first tabernacle. (So says the Bible) And as for the secular world, the gouging prices charged by the oil companies are a form of stealing but one not punishable by law-not yet anyway.

9th Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

The ninth commandment is constantly abused wherever the oath is required. Having suspected criminals take the oath in a court of law is foolhardy. Using the Bible to insure the veracity of testimony is even more absurd. Prisons are filled with sanctimonious liars. Nevertheless, it's surprising how many gullible jurors give added weight to an oath sworn on the Bible. Elected officials are sworn into office by taking an oath on that book and some of them are far from truthful.

10th Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his ox nor his ass nor any *thing* that is thy neighbor's."

Note: I've already commented that this commandment makes the wife a piece of property and devalues all women.

If they needed so many laws to keep people honest in the old days, there must have been an awful lot of cheating going on. Although laws of conduct were needed in a barbaric society, a code of ethics remains a necessity even today. In my opinion, our current society appears no less violent in its behavior than did the tribes of Moses. "God's laws" didn't work then and it's highly unlikely that they will now. We have seen that some of the rules deserve merit while others are nothing more than pure superstition. However, the *value* of the commandments is not the issue, the ones that are recognized by the world, *is*. If you have verified the verses that I've indicated, you must agree that no liberties were taken with Biblical text. The discrepancies I cited could be found by anyone that does

not feel intimidated by Scripture. It seems inconceivable that we have been teaching the wrong Commandments for four thousand years since the Clergy identified them as “God’s Laws”.

Note: In all sincerity, I feel no prejudice towards any faith, in fact I favor religious observance for I sincerely believe that people have a *need* to worship. I also admire the works of many churches and synagogues for their help in welcoming new arrivals to the neighborhoods where they can meet and make friends. Besides providing a meaningful social life for adults and children alike, much splendid charity work wouldn’t be accomplished without their efforts. It is only the Bible’s portrayal of God that I find offensive, not the book in its entirety, for let me say there is also much that is good to be found within its pages.

SLAVERY

If the above depiction of the so-called laws of God were not enough of an insult to our intelligence, the Bible also contains “God given laws” on how to treat slaves. We rarely hear the Clergy speak of these practices yet the “good book” attributes them to the Lord and claims He gave them to man. What is so ironic is that most of these “laws” deal with Hebrew slaves. So the great Biblical miracle of parting the Red Sea allowed the Jews to escape bondage in Egypt only to be sold as slaves in their own land. These laws “given by God” (says the Bible) are cruel and heartless and continue to defame our Father. God never created any of these inhuman “laws”. They were obviously written by slave owners for their own greedy agendas.

Nothing you’ve ever read compares with the meticulous instructions for the treatment of slaves as those found in the “Holy Book.” If you think the South was rough on those oppressed people before the Civil War, wait till you read the laws that existed in Biblical times. The height of irony is that most of these laws pertained to Hebrew slaves. Here are some “God given” laws for slaves and slave ownership that appear in Holy Writ (See Exodus Chapter 21: verses 1 through 26 for these following quotes):

If you buy an Hebrew manservant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.

If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons and daughters; the wife and her children shall be her *master's*, and he shall go out by *himself*.

And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free. Then the master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him forever.

If a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as men servants do.

If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed, to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.

The slave must work in any capacity that his owner dictates. After six years of labor he will go out free. In the event his owner gives him a wife and they have children, he gets freedom but his wife and children remain *property* of the owner.

If a man buys a manservant and a maidservant and they have a family during their debenture, they go out free but their family remains the master's property. If, after six years of servitude, the slave comes to his master and says, "I love my master, my wife and my children and I want to stay with them and I give up my freedom," he then he belongs to the master for the rest of his life. Then he must be marked to show all that he is his owner's property. The marking is accomplished in the following manner. The law instructs the master to take his slave to the door and fasten him to the doorpost with an awl through his ear and the slave is now his forever.

If a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she shall not be freed as other slaves are. If the new master takes her for his wife and she fails to please him in bed, he may take her to a strange land and sell her there. But he will have no further say over her because he has dealt with her deceitfully.

If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod and they die, he will surely be punished. But if either of them continues to live for a day or two, he will not be punished for they are his *money*.

Note: Now, here are a few laws that applied to everyone, not merely to slaves. They are called judgments and Bible writers, as well as Moses, claim that Jehovah Himself ordered these laws. I most strongly deny that God was ever that cruel.

(Continued Same Chapter-Exodus)

If a man hurts a woman so that she miscarriages, he earns her husband's wrath and pays whatever price the judges decide.

He that smiteth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

He who steals a man and sells him will surely be put to death.

Question: What happens if he kidnaps a man and *doesn't* sell him?

If two men work together and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist, he shall not be put to death but "keepeth his bed."

If a master strikes his slave's eye and he or she dies, let him go free for his eye's sake.

If a thief steals his neighbor's property and no one sees him do it, then he must take the oath of the Lord and receive no punishment.

Note: What if he's lying?

If a man entices a maid to sleep with him, he must marry her. If he refuses, he must pay the going price of a virgin's dowry.

Do not allow a witch to live.

Note: Can we accept that God really believes in witches? Since scripture claims that it was God who created all these laws. Can we blame the pious people of Salem?

Does anyone truly feel that the Bible treats God with respect by claiming that these are his laws? The faithful will undoubtedly be angry at me for showing that the Bible defames the Almighty but I hope they will at least see that I am *defending* Him. I have no resentment towards them for choosing to believe these stories because their parents undoubtedly did the same. I just fail to

understand how believing such tales can make an individual virtuous and righteous.

Right here I will add one of God's injunctions that baffles me no end. Jehovah says, "man who layeth down with man shall be stoned to death". I'm sure we recall reading not long ago that a gay man was chosen to serve the Lord as a Bishop. How does a man of the cloth reconcile this paradox? And how do all those that rushed to Massachusetts to participate in same sex marriage feel about this Biblical injunction? My own personal view is that both male and female homosexuality has a genetic component and if this premise proves to be valid, then the Lord is responsible for creating countless people who may have been born gay. I'm sure my opinion will not satisfy bigots who commit hate crimes against these individuals but I'm hopeful that one-day science will give us the answer.

CHAPTER THREE

WHO WROTE THE OLD TESTAMENT?

In Chapter One, we read of all the horrible crimes that God allegedly perpetrated against humanity. My aim has been to defend an image that is sacred to almost every human being, by refuting the veracity of these Scriptural reports. Since millions of believers accept these tales without the slightest knowledge of who wrote them, it becomes as important to verify the identities of the authors.

History shows that a new idea was often met with great resistance despite the intent of its innovator. When any concept ran contrary to the status quo, the result frequently incited anger and a desire to punish the "offender". But when an idea challenged *religious* beliefs, its author was generally vilified and regarded as a menace to society. During the Dark Ages any disagreement with the Bible produced public outcries culminating in the Inquisitions of Christianity where dissenters were burned at the stake or tortured unmercifully by pouring hot molten lead into their ears, stretching them upon the rack until their joints separated from their torsos, slowly tightening ropes around their heads until their skulls burst and countless other diabolical horrors. The only way victims could stop the torment was to recant their beliefs or perish. Even today, literally millions of pious believers remain antagonistic towards those who deny Scripture and will sometimes go to extremes in defending their version of Creation. They are adamant in their convictions despite scientific evidence, and have continued to cling

to the Mosaic explanation for the last four thousand years. Up to now, I have been attempting to prove that God never committed the horrific atrocities of which He stands accused in the Bible. Now I wish to go one step further and prove that the renowned biblical patriarchs were not and could not have been the authors of the books that bear their names. Having said that, I will now I begin this next section with the following provocative question:

If you picked up a book in your favorite bookshop, written by someone you respected, which told of everything that occurred during and after the 9-11 attack and the book claimed it was printed in 1990, would you accept the word of the publisher? If it happened to be a very well known book company, would that sway your judgment? Suppose a similar paradox were discovered in the Bible, would that make it a completely different matter?

Religion in every culture has held such a profound grasp on the mind that I feel it's important for many people to discover, that though they profess to love God, they are willing to believe the worst of Him. Previously, by using reason and common sense, I have tried to protect God by the claim that the Bible defamed His character and morality. Now, I shall confine myself to passages that are found within the Bible itself, for that type of evidence indicts its own source by revealing testimony that may be fraudulent.

The method of discovery will stem directly from the Scriptures, so before I begin, permit me to cite an example. When our forebears arrived in this country, they settled on the east coast in the city they called New Amsterdam. In the year 1667, they officially changed its name to New York. Consequently, if any *undated* material were to be found containing the name New York, we could be certain that it was written *after* the name of New Amsterdam was changed. By employing this rationale during my investigation, I shall not need to go outside of the Bible to find the required evidence.

Allow me to cite one other example that may present some startling ramifications. In Genesis, a book that millions believe was written by Moses, chapter 32: verse 31 reads: "These are the Kings that reigned in the land of Edom *before* any King reigned over the Children of Israel". The writer then names the Kings and reports the reign and the death of each. He continues by naming the Dukes that were also part of the royal line, which proves that this author must have lived *after* Kings and Dukes ruled the Jewish monarchy. The man we call Moses died more than a thousand

years *before* any of that occurred. This same writer goes on to report events that happened long *after* the death of Moses. Consequently, these cannot be the words of Moses and if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we truly don't know who wrote Genesis.

This discovery would normally seem rational to most people but the pious mind will undoubtedly come up with some explanation to defend itself. Not that I fault them in any way because I know from personal experience, that when parents that worship Scripture raise us, it becomes extremely difficult to remove our blinders. A mother who believed every word in the Bible brought me up. She made sure that all the seeds of superstition were sown in my mind and cultivated them with great care. It has taken more than half my life and an incredible amount of study to finally free myself from her beliefs.

I continue my thesis with the blanket statement that *none* of the Biblical Patriarchs were the authors of the books for which they are credited, and raise further doubt that Moses wrote one word of the entire Pentateuch. Now, in the remote possibility that his statement turns out to be true, we would then be under no obligation to believe any of it. But if, despite all the evidence I will present, if we continued to honor these "revered" figures, it would be a conscious and willful decision to do so.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, is filled with events that occurred long before Moses was born. We must at least agree that he couldn't write about Creation *before* it happened since nobody was alive then to witness the phenomenon. And how could he write of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel, the great flood that annihilated every living thing, or the sacred covenants made by God with Abraham and Ishmael before they occurred? Whoever is writing Genesis-gives us every minute detail of Creation, and since the birth of Moses does not occur until the *second* book, called Exodus, how could Moses have known all this before he was born?

But, let us assume for the moment, as I imagine the faithful will, that somehow Moses was informed of these things, perhaps by some kind of divine inspiration or by legends told to him by his ancestors. Given the importance of these books, some kind of attribution would be clearly demarcated in his writings, so that posterity would understand the truth of his insertions. But no such clear authority is cited in the Bible and we are left with the apocryphal account that Moses was the author.

As we read further, we soon discover that in order to believe the Bible we would have to give up every feeling of tenderness we have ever known. We would be forced to surrender all our empathy and compassion for our fellow man. The Bible now tells us that God ordered Moses to lead his army from city to city and invade peoples that had done them no harm. The specific orders are, “Kill every man, woman and child—every father, mother and babe; put them all to the sword and leave no survivors, save only those women that have never known man by sleeping with him. These you shall give to your soldiers”—and that is what the Bible reports God told Moses.

Terrible though this story may be, because it appears in Holy Writ, we fail to get the full impact of its horror. “Oh well”, if God ordered it He must have had a good reason” is how many react. But when we recall what Hitler did to six million human beings, we can then *feel* the brutality of that carnage, and when we remember the mass graves of Saddam Hussein and how he gassed the Kurds without regard for the innocent babe, we are stirred within by a feeling of rage. As we remember the ethnic cleansing as the Serbs massacred Albanians, and visualize the images of concentration camps, tortured souls being herded into cremation furnaces—we seethe at the callous acts that tyrants commit. But when the “good book” tells us that God ordered the same ghastly deeds, we fail completely to feel the moral indignation and the normal emotion of pity. The horrific deeds are the same except that the alleged perpetrator in this case is God. Can we allow ourselves to even consider the Creator of Heaven and Earth being so heartless simply because the Bible tells us so? And what does it do to our deepest feeling for our Creator who gave us this bountiful earth? I find it impossible to envision God in those terms and furthermore, I don’t want to. Imagine Him deciding to do it again and turn upon all of us, ordering such slaughter and destruction. Regardless what Scripture tells us, how is it possible for anyone to believe such things of the one we wish to love and to love us?

It seems to me the only way we can truly experience our emotions to the events in the Bible is by *dramatizing* the narratives themselves. In more meaningful terms that would be like pretending we’re getting the news over the media. For example, how does this sound—?

“We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin. This afternoon God ordered Moses to slay all those that had worshipped the Golden Calf while he was away for forty days and

forty nights. This afternoon in a brutal attack upon the unsuspecting tribe, he had three thousand Israelites murdered. Moses said that God was now satisfied. We'll be right back with the latest figures".

Shocking to hear it that way isn't it? But when it's only one brief sentence in the Bible it reads, "That day there fell three thousand men". Are we really to believe that such bestiality is the desire of the Lord?

Or how about this one:

"Flash! The war was going badly for us this afternoon when Joshua commanded the Lord to stop the sun and give him more time to slay the enemy. God kept the sun from setting for twenty-four hours and even joined the fray by hurling huge rocks down from Heaven. The rocks He threw killed more than Joshua's whole army combined. We'll be back after a word from our sponsor.

Or this?

"News extra: Both cities of Sodom and Gomorra were set ablaze by Jehovah today because God declared every inhabitant living there was a sinner. The townsfolk ran amok as their hair and skin caught fire. Terrified men, women and children fled to rooftops where they burned to ashes. One little girl ran up to our reporter screaming as charred flesh fell from her bones. A man named Lot and his two daughters were the only survivors. Be sure to hear the full report at eleven."

Now let's examine the text of the alleged writers.

Although Moses is credited with authorship of the Pentateuch, doubt is raised by the grammatical tense that is used throughout his books. When writing about one's self, most authors use the first person form. For example: "I saw, I spoke" or "To me, for me" whereas Moses constantly uses phrases like, "Thus saith the Lord to Moses" or, "God spake face to face with Moses", or here's a very intriguing quote: "Moses was buried in the mountains of Moab and no one knows where his sepulcher is *unto this day*". How could a dead man write that? Reason tells us that someone else must, have penned the phrase; "*unto this day*" long *after* Moses was dead.

Let us weigh the "alleged" words of Moses carefully as we continue.

In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, whoever is writing this states that Lot was taken prisoner and his housekeepers marched to all the way to the city of Dan to rescue him. In the Book of Judges, Chapter 18; verse 28 we discover that the Danites captured the city of Laish and changed its name to Dan. That event occurred only one thousand years before Christ so Moses could not have even *heard* of the city of Dan when Genesis was actually written.

As the leader of wandering Jews, Moses certainly should have known the facts reported in this next book, Exodus-if he wrote it. Chapter 16: “and the children of Israel did eat mamma for forty years until they came onto a land inhabited; they did eat manna *until* they came onto the borders of Canaan”. By using the word *until*, the writer shows us he had knowledge of what they ate *after* they reached Canaan. It’s not possible that Moses wrote that verse because God didn’t permit him enter the Promised Land, so how could he have known what they ate *after* they entered Canaan? That should put to rest the false premise that Moses wrote those words.

Ample evidence exists that Moses didn’t write the Book of Deuteronomy either because the writer talks of giants, one in particular, Og, King of Balshan. In the book, he meticulously describes the dimensions of his bed. Transposing Biblical math from cubits to inches, Og’s bed measured 16 feet-4 inches in length and 7 feet-4 inches in width. But then the writer gives himself away by adding, “The bed was an *ancient* relic from the city of Rabbah, which Moses did *not* attack. Rabbah was finally taken by one of King David’s generals 400 years *after* the death of Moses.

I believe I have shown that Moses did not write the books attributed to him, without asking the reader to surrender any cherished beliefs he may have. I’ve simply demonstrated that any reasonable person would agree that no man could write of things that had not yet happened or of events that occurred after his death. I will now move on to the book of Joshua, who was Moses’ immediate successor, and by the same process prove that he did not write his book either.

The book of Joshua, I’m sorry to say, is even more violent and barbaric than his predecessor’s, for Joshua was a military man involved in the most fierce and blood curdling battles of conquest. He led the children of Israel through a succession of murderous wars until his death twenty-five years later. The literary style of his exploits is too similar to the former book to be a coincidence and

seems to have been written by the same individual. Once again the third person form is used, as in the sentence referring to Joshua—"his fame was noised throughout all the country." And even more significant than that is the sentence in chapter 14: 21. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that *outlived* Joshua." It's obvious that some historian wrote this sentence for how could Joshua write anything about those that outlived him? Anyway, the entire book is ghastly, filled with murder, rape and even more savage than any of the Pentateuch. To my way of thinking, it is just as blasphemous as the others because it blames all the bloodshed on direct orders from God.

Chapter 8:verse 23 gives the following account of Joshua's army invading a city called Ai. "And Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever even a desolation *unto this day*. (Obviously unto this day means it was written at that time) Then he hanged the King of Ai at the gate, "and raised thereon a heap of stones which remaineth *unto this very day*." Now we can easily see that the phrase "*this very day*" indicates that this was written a good many years later. It most certainly implies longer than Joshua's twenty-five years reign.

I don't wish to digress at this point but, as I mentioned earlier, this book tells of a day that God stopped the sun on Joshua's command. Aside from proving that Joshua did not write the book, should we accept the word of any man who believed that the sun rises and sets? Had this writer been acquainted with Astronomy he would have had to say, " God stopped the Earth's rotation on Joshua's command" for that's what causes the illusion of sunrise and sunset. It is transparent that some biographer was simply writing about the *legend* of Joshua.

Note: Incidentally, should any reader feel guilty that by believing my analysis he is committing a sin, what he's experiencing is a fail-safe mechanism of religion, designed to discourage investigation of the Bible.

To amplify my claim that the Patriarchs did not and could not have written their own books, let's continue with this biographer of Joshua. He mentions events that occurred immediately *after* Joshua's death by referring to people known as Jesobites. In 1: 18, he talks of a war by Judah against Jerusalem, which was known as Jebusi at the time. But David was king of Judah at when Jerusalem was captured, so by referring to *Jerusalem* instead of

Jebusi, the writer positively identifies this text being written *after* Joshua and by someone other than he.

The book of Ruth is absolutely innocuous. It is simply a tale of a country maiden using her wiles on her cousin Boaz in trying to get into his bed. Refreshingly, however, is the fact that there is no mention of murder or rape throughout the text. Whether or not it belongs in a book about God prompts me to ask, "Are the other books worthy of being called the word of our Creator?"

The same type of evidence applies to the first and second book of Samuel, for they tell of events that did not occur until years *after* Samuel was dead. Plain common sense is all that's required to admit the impossibility of that happening. Samuel died before Saul and proof of that exists in the first chapter; verse 28, which the faithful believe was written by Samuel. "Saul and the witch of Endor conjured Samuel up *after* he was dead." The rest of the book gives historical data about Saul's reign and that of David, which followed, so someone other than Samuel must have written all of the above even though pity credits him as the author. But credit for shrewdness, however, must be given to the actual writer because he relates incidents of a more ancient time and cleverly uses terms and jargon of that period. It is as if I were to write in the Elizabethan style of Shakespeare in pretence that this book you're reading was written back then. When this unknown writer tells the story of Saul seeking a clairvoyant, he says, "Long ago in Israel, when one went to inquire of God, he spake thus, 'Let us go to a *seer*.' That which is now called a prophet was *before* called a seer." Inadvertently, the writer clearly reveals that he is writing this in the present. If you fail to perceive these discrepancies you can pride yourself on being a truly pious and virtuous individual.

The books of Chronicles and the books of Kings are both essentially a historic record of the Kings of Israel and those of Judah. I might add that those Monarchs had their hands as bloody as any that reigned in England when the Tower of London was active. It seems that absolute power almost always corrupts and those rulers that sat upon the Hebrew throne were no exception. In chapter 10, in the Second Book of Kings, one horrible story is told involving Elisha, a man of God, who anointed Jehu to become King of Israel by assassinating Ahab, his predecessor. Shortly thereafter, two baskets full of children's heads, seventy in all, were placed at the entrance to the city. They were the heads of Ahab's children.

As if these tales aren't dreadful enough to tell in a book about our Creator, Kings 2-chapter 15:16 compounds the gory escapades of royalty by telling pious readers that King Menahen, quote: "smote the city of Tipsha because they would not open the city to him, and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up." No matter who the authors of these books were, we can be certain of one thing- they were not men of God.

The two books of Chronicles present a repetition of these crimes except that the historical portions are not as carefully detailed and sometimes even contradict each other. Still, when it comes to the miraculous these books are as full of wonder as the rest of the Bible. Regardless who wrote Kings and Chronicles, I include the following to show the kind of things the authors expected us to believe. Kings 2, Chapter 2: 11, "And it came to pass that there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and Elijah went up by a whirlwind, into heaven". If it's magic you're looking for the Bible will exceed your expectations.

In the same book verse 24, a group of children keep-calling Elisha 'Bald head, bald head' and this holy man of God "turned back and looked on them and cursed them in the name of the Lord."

In Kings 2, Chapter 13:21, a man is being buried in the same sepulcher in which Elisha had been buried. As they were lowering him down into the grave, his corpse happened to touch the bones of Elisha and the dead man "was revived and stood up upon his feet." Incredible as it may seem, this "miracle", which is not much talked about, appears to equal, if not surpass, the resurrection of Lazarus and with far less effort. Yes, this "Holy" book could give the great Houdini a run for his money.

To show the slipshod manner of disarray in which scriptural reports are handled, I must point out something that you may find hard to believe. The *last two* verses that end the book of Chronicles are repeated word for word as the *first two* verses in the following book of Ezra. Obviously the same author must have written both for what else would explain this duplication? And while on the subject of duplication, let me also point out that Genesis 36:31 and Chronicles 1:43 are also repeated word for word. This makes one wonder, was Chronicles written *before* Genesis?

In the book of Ezra and the book of Jeremiah, both "prophets" offer a list of all the families that were returned from captivity in Babylon. Doing some math on both lists reveals a significant

discrepancy. Ezra tells us 42,360 people returned while Jeremiah's total is only 31,089.

Note: For those who find it difficult to accept the redundancy of my claim that the Patriarchs were not the authors, we now come to the anomaly of the Bible, the Book of Job. There is nothing in Scripture that remotely resembles the style and character of this work. Treachery and murder play no part in the text. Instead, we see the meditations of a mature person who understands the vicissitudes of life. Job shows a mind cultivated in science, which the Hebrews definitely were not. In fact, the renowned Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, commented that Job carried no internal evidence of being a Hebrew book- that the genius of the composition and the drama of the piece are not Hebrew, that it shows signs as to have been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that the author of Job was Gentile. The character represented under the name of Satan (which is the first and only time this name is mentioned in the Bible) does not correspond to any Hebrew idea. In addition, the mention of astronomical names Pleiades, Arcturus and Orion are Greek and not Hebrew names and nowhere in the Bible can we find that the Hebrews were conversant with Astronomy. In essence, no one has the slightest idea who wrote Job and most scholars concur that it does not even belong in the Bible.

Ecclesiastes, the next book, is attributed to Solomon and considered divine by many. It is filled with songs and wisdom that the King allegedly possessed. He was about nineteen when his reign began (replete with hormones and libido associated with youth), and spent much of his time in sexual activity with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, which perhaps some men secretly envy. But it may be inconsistent to attribute both songs and great wisdom to one preoccupied in a thousand debaucheries. How can a man be genuinely happy or wise, when he has no significant other upon whom to focus his loving care while spending his days in a multitude of orgasms until it becomes devoid of all meaning? The reality of life shows that such activity would soon pale into a weary boredom. This may be substantiated by Solomon's melancholy lament later in life, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit", which seems to express a *lack* of wisdom and a weariness with life, undoubtedly brought on by trying to satisfy seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

The Books of the Prophets ends the first part of the Bible and, though there were sixteen "prophets" in all, only Isaiah and Jeremiah are mentioned with any significance. The books present

a wild and disoriented composition, put together without a beginning, middle nor end. They lack meaning. They are incoherent and tasteless and contain a kind of ranting, which may accurately be called prose run mad.

In Chapter 7:Verse 14, Ahab, King of Judah asks for a sign from Isaiah that two rival Kings will not prevail against him. Isaiah makes the following prediction: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” He adds, “Whose name shall be Immanuel.” However, the upshot is that instead of failing against Ahab, as Isaiah had predicted, the Kings succeeded. In the 28th Chapter of Chronicles 2, Ahab was defeated and one hundred twenty eight thousand of his people were slaughtered and carried off into captivity. Seven hundred years *after* Isaiah made his prediction, Jesus was born and he wasn’t named Immanuel. Shall we say so much for the Prophets and let it go at that, or do we recognize that thousands of years later there are many that still believe it possible to “see” into the future? Millions are spent annually on psychics and fortunetellers revealing that the belief has persisted since antiquity. Two millenniums later should be time enough to surrender the irrational concepts of early man-and yet; the serpent of superstition continues to thrust its toxic head into the human consciousness.

Well, I believe I’ve made my point that no one really knows who wrote the Old Testament. It continues to amaze me that millions worship a deity who is portrayed in such a cruel, heartless and immoral manner. Nonetheless, I have protected God’s image by denying that any of these events ever happened as stated in the Bible. I will now turn my attention to the remainder of that book.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHRISTIANITY

Throughout our long history millions have believed every word in the Bible but many worshippers now feel that the Old Testament no longer carries its original authority. They discount much of the fables on the grounds that though our forebears meant well, they were misinformed. These folks are what I term *selective* worshippers who accept the things hey find agreeable and discount the rest. Unfortunately, Scripture does not offer us that luxury. Either the Bible is the word of God or it’s not. And if the Almighty wrote it, as many members of the Clergy claim, didn’t He know in advance that one testament wouldn’t suffice? If Jehovah is infallible why did he need to write a second one? And if He *did*

author the New Testament, He has presented himself as a Personality that's not even remotely like the god of the Old Testament. Besides, it's not so easy to dispense with the old one because a number of its prophecies are fulfilled in the new. In essence both testaments are irrevocably intertwined. Were it not for that fact alone, Christianity would have no gospels and no god figure as well. It is therefore not possible to discount the Old Testament or the entire foundation of Christianity would collapse.

In the second part of the Bible Jesus Christ pays the ultimate price for the "Original Sin" of Adam and Eve. As the gospel according to Luke unfolds, we meet a young Jewish girl named Mary who receives a visit from the angel Gabriel announcing that she has will conceive a holy infant. This fulfills the prophesy of the Old Testament that a Messiah is coming. Incidentally, few worshippers know that Luke is the only Apostle to tell this story of Gabriel's visit to Mary. Luke must have also considered it an advantage to claim that Jesus was a blood descendant of King David because he provides a genealogy tracing Jesus back to the King. In doing so, he lists forty-three generations from David to Jesus. Matthew also offers a genealogy but Matthew's list contains only twenty-eight. When we compare both genealogies, we discover that no two names on either list are the same, except for the final name of Joseph. It therefore appears that Joseph is the descendant of David, not Jesus, for the name Mary is nowhere to be found. We are left in a quandary because the New Testament has just begun and already we are struck by inconsistencies

Both Luke and Matthew provided the genealogies that appear below. These Apostles attempt to trace Christ's ancestry back to King David. Why both genealogies end with the name Joseph is a mystery since Jesus was supposed to be the Son of *God*.

Matthew's

Luke's

1. Christ	1. Christ	23. Neri
2. Joseph	2. Joseph	24. Nelchi
3. Jacob	3. Heli	25. Addi
4. Matthan	4. Matthat	26. Cosam
5. Eleazar	5. Levi	27. Elnodom
6. Fluid	6. Melchi	28. Er
7. Achin	7. Janna	29. Iose
8. Sadoc	8. Joseph	30. Eliezer
9. Azor	9. Mattathias	31. Jorim
10. Eliakin	10. Amos	32. Matthat
11. Abiud	11. Naum	33. Levi
12. Zoroabel	12. Esli	34. Simeon
13. Salathiel	13. Nagge	35. Juda
14. Jechonias	14. Math	36. Joseph
15. Josias	15. Matthias	37. Jonan
16. Amon	16. Semei	38. Eliakim
17. Manasses	17. Joseph	39. Mela
18. Ezekias	18. Juda	40. Menan
19. Achaz	19. Joanna	41. Mattatha
20. Jonatham	20. Rhesa	42. Nathan
21. Ozias	21. Zorobabel	43. David
22. Joram	22. Salathiel	
23. Josaphat		
24. Asa		
25. Abia		
26. Rohoam		
27. Solomon		
28. David		

Note: The only names that match on both lists are **Joseph, Christ and David**. Luke even omits David's son King Solomon. These two gentlemen are presumed to be members of Christ's twelve apostles and I assume they were close friends, so what can account for the disparity between these lists? Obviously both cannot be correct, or perhaps neither. Could someone else have written these genealogies?

As the text continues we note a striking difference between the Personalities of Jesus and Jehovah. While Christ is kind and gentle, full of love and compassion, Jehovah is portrayed as wrathful and raging with jealousy and vengeance. Jesus never mentions the despicable deeds that Bible writers attribute to Jehovah; not one word about the awful flood that drowned the world or the cruel punishment of Adam and Eve. No mention of betraying the Hebrews by making the Pharaoh chase after them. Not even a word of the deadly plagues that God visited upon the

Egyptians or the slaying of every firstborn. There is no doubt that Christ gave the world a new image of God-one that is the antithesis of the Old Testament deity. Jesus envisioned the Father quite differently than the way Moses depicted Him. In essence, just as I am doing, Christ was also defending God against defamation of His character and morality.

Moses was still greatly revered when Jesus began challenging many of his principles. The worshippers that obeyed the Mosaic Code considered his actions blasphemy. One day he went to the Synagogue and berated the loan sharks, threw down their tables and chased them and their animals from the Temple. But surely Christ must have known that moneylenders and animal sacrifice were part of Jehovah's rituals. Furthermore, his unusual practice of exorcising devils from those he believed were possessed frightened his fellow citizens. Despite these biblical reports, is it possible that Jesus Christ believed in devils? Scripture assures us that he believed in the existence of demons with all His heart. But since his "Father" created everything He must have also created devils, but why? If Satan were destined to become Christ's archenemy, why would God create devils? The answer is simple-He didn't! In olden days people believed that illness was caused by devils inhabiting our bodies. It's hard not to feel compassion for them because medicine, as we know it, hadn't been established yet and no one would have dreamed that microbes were the real culprits. Still, if Jesus Christ were truly God's son why wouldn't he have known that?

The unforgettable scene at the cross can melt the heart of an Atheist. His pain and anguish have been indelibly imprinted on the minds of the faithful for the last two thousand years. It is excruciating as Christ pleads to Yahweh, "Eli Eli lamach sabachtani, My God My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and God never answers. Yet, the Bible cites several instances where God spoke aloud; once from heaven, again from a cloud and also from a burning bush and scripture tells us "His voice was heard by many." But when His own Son pleads with Him to answer-not one word. He just silently allows Jesus to die. Such callousness at the end of Christ's life defames the very meaning of a loving and caring god. The pious ones will continue to venerate this book and never question such lack of compassion from our Creator, but not I.

Note: A painstaking analysis of the New Testament reveals the startling fact that neither Luke nor Mark was a member of Christ's *original* twelve Apostles. Then by what authority did these two men write gospels claiming to be eyewitnesses to the events reported in

all four gospels? This becomes extremely significant when we realize that it was Luke alone that gave Christianity three of its most crucial tenets.

1. Angel Gabriel visiting Mary.
2. The Immaculate Conception.
3. Jesus born in the manger.

And both Mark and Luke are the only disciples that reported “The Ascension” of Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN MYTH

Some time ago on public television, Bill Moyers presented the renowned mythologist, Joseph Campbell, in a fascinating series of interviews. Mr. Campbell has since departed this world leaving a contribution to theological thought that will remain a classic for many years to come. According to this learned gentleman, every faith begins with a myth, which then spawns the rituals, tenets and Scripture of that religion. The Christian myth is no exception—says Mr. Campbell, for it springs from one of the more fascinating flights of man’s imagination:

“In the beginning, Satan was God’s most favorite angel. He served his master faithfully and lived in peace and harmony with all the heavenly occupants. One day, God decided to create human beings and ordered Satan that henceforth he would serve man. Lucifer adamantly refused to serve anyone but his Lord and master, God. Jehovah became livid at his disobedience but Satan remained adamant and hostility began to escalate between the two powers until a full-scale war broke out in Heaven. It was catastrophic because many innocent angels were killed (?) and the conflict ended with Satan’s “fall from grace in the eyes of his Lord”. Jehovah banished him to Hades where he would tend the flames of Hell forevermore”. If it were not for this myth, “The Fallen Angel” might have enjoyed a far better reputation; in fact we may never have heard the phrase, “The Prince of Darkness” or “Devil worship”.

According to Mr. Campbell, and Bertrand Russell, this is the original myth that gave rise to the Christian faith, following which rituals and tenets were added to flush out the religion. By creating the Devil as the epitome of evil, the myth served the purpose of absolving God of all responsibility for the cruelties and injustices that occur in the world. The creation of two separate powers (one for good and one for evil) eliminated all the grays and everything was painted in black and white. Today, when we imagine God and

Satan as mortal enemies, we fail to recognize the alliance that the early church constructed. It's almost as though they created a partnership between the two powers so that when we die, God judges us and sends the "Sinners" to Satan in Hell. We are well aware of what supposedly awaits us if we arrive in Hades but what happens if we receive our just reward and go to Heaven? Have we ever taken the time to think this through?

We've been conditioned to earthly pleasures throughout life and spent most of our existence pursuing the things we love. What would we do with ourselves in Paradise? There are no football or basketball games or other sporting events to relish. What about the love we have for our cars and our computers? We couldn't drive anywhere and there's certainly no Internet or TV in the Hereafter. It's not very likely that we could find many interesting hobbies to fill our time. Perhaps we could take a trip to the mall for some shopping? No need for designer clothes up here. How about a nice glass of cold beer at the local tavern? I don't think so. Hey, how about sex? Jesus said that all marriages are dissolved in Heaven. Hmm, I would think not. But wait, I mean with my own spouse? I can see where that wouldn't work either because suppose I had outlived three spouses, I don't imagine I'd be allowed to sleep with all of them there. No, that would definitely be a Sin. By the way, can one sin while in Heaven? And if that's possible, will that soul be sent to Hell-even after having lived an exemplary life on earth? Hmmm, better keep on thinking. Say, how about food? Scripture says Jesus ate a hearty meal of honeycomb and fish after He had risen. But does it really make sense to continue needing nourishment-and toilets for eternity? Suppose we turned into angels-could we just fly around all day? I've heard some people say they thought they might become pure energy, but what kind? Others say they would be in ecstasy just to sit on the right hand of God. But that's out the realm of our experience. Hmmm. Obviously, life after death would have to involve the same sort of things that we loved and did while we were alive. So, the Hereafter would probably be like living life all over again. But many good people have led very unhappy lives. What would be their reward after a lifetime of righteousness? They undoubtedly fantasize that suddenly they would feel gloriously happy but it doesn't work that way; happiness is not something we find-it's something we choose. And yet it's not difficult to understand why so many dream of going to Heaven. This is a pretty rough world we live in with all its crime, murders, rapes, wars, kidnappings, drug trafficking and injustices that so many innocent people experience. It becomes reasonable to fantasize that there *must* be a better place somewhere, a place where

everyone is kind and even the animals don't kill and eat each other. It's completely natural that Heaven would seem to be a better world than this one.

I'm sure lots of well meaning people have dreamed about the Hereafter without giving it much rational thought but suppose, to our amazement, we failed to arrive in either Paradise or in Hades? Would there really be much fun being ghosts and continuing to wander through our old haunts for eternity? This concept of life after death definitely needs more thought.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

Right now I feel it would be significant for many people to discover exactly how and when our own "Holy Book" came into being.

The "Judaic-Christian" Bible was created approximately 300 years after the Crucifixion. It was during the third century in the Ottoman Empire, that Emperor Constantine settled the religious strife in the country by converting to Christianity. Constantine decided that a "Holy Book" was needed and ordered his Bishops and Cardinals to collect old folk tales, Hebrew stories and assorted gospels written by unknown authors after the Crucifixion. A meeting, known as the Council of Nicea, was held and among the many works collected were the five books of Moses, the gospels according to Peter, according to Mary, according to James, according to Thomas, according to Matthew, according to John and a plethora of Apocryphal fragments. After much deliberation, The Emperor's Clergy cast their votes for the manuscripts they wanted included in one cohesive volume. It was this compilation of themes that later came to be known as the "Holy Bible". Consider this: if those men had chosen different works, the faithful would now believe other authors. The revered Bible, which millions of worshippers have accepted for millenniums as the Word of God, was originally created by a vote of *men*.

Note: Let me repeat that I am neither for nor against any form of religious observance because I sincerely believe that people have a basic need to worship. But I question whether religions need fearful gods in order for them to work?

I shall now discuss the Authorship of the New Testament but first allow me to introduce another of my mentors, Robert Greene Ingersoll, the great orator of the last century, with a few *historical* facts.

SUN GODS

By Robert Greene Ingersol

The first organized ceremonial religion was the worship of the sun. The sun was the "Sky Father" the "All seeing" source of life-the fireside of the world. The sun was regarded as a god who fought the darkness, the power of evil, and the enemy of man.

There have been many sun gods, and they seem to have been the chief deities of the ancient religions. They have been worshipped in many lands-by many nations that have passed to death and dust.

Apollo was a sun god and he fought and conquered the serpent of night. Baldur was a sun god. He was in love with the Dawn-a maiden. Krishna was a sun god. At his birth the Ganges was thrilled from its source to the sea, and all the trees, the dead as well as the living, burst into leaf and bud and flower. Hercules was a sun god and so was Samson whose strength was in his hair-that is to say his beams. Delilah, the shadow of darkness, sheared him of his strength. Osiris, Bacchus, Mithra, Hermes, Buddha and Quetzaloal, Prometheus, Zoroaster, and Perseus, Lao tsze, Fo hi, Horus and Ramses were all sun gods.

All of these gods had gods for fathers and their mothers were virgins. Stars celebrated by celestial music announced the births of nearly all and voices declared that a blessing had come to this poor world. All of these gods were born in humble places -in caves, under trees, in common inns and tyrants sought to kill them all when they were babes. All these sun gods were born at the Winter Solstice at Christmas. Nearly all were worshipped by "wise men ". All of them fasted for forty days, all of them taught in parables-all of them wrought miracles-all met with a violent death and all rose from the dead.

The history of these gods is the same history of Christ.

The cross was a symbol thousands of years before our era. It was a symbol of life, of immortality of the god Agni and it was chiseled upon the tombs many ages before a line of our Bible was written. Baptism is far older than Christianity-than Judaism. The Hindus. Egyptians, Greeks and Romans had Holy water before a Catholic lived. The Eucharist was borrowed from the Pagans; Ceres, the goddess of the field-Bacchus of the vine. At harvest festival they made cakes of wheat and said, "This is the flesh of the goddess". They drank wine and cried, "This is the blood of our god."

The Egyptians had a Trinity. They worshipped Osiris, Isis and Horus thousands of years before The Father, Son and Holy Ghost were known.

The Tree of Life grew in India, in China and among the Aztecs long before the Garden of Eden was planted.

Long before the Bible was known other nations had their sacred books. The dogma of the Fall of Man, The Atonement and Salvation by Faith are older than our religion.

In our blessed gospel-in our Divine scheme there is nothing new-nothing original. All is old-all borrowed, pieced and patched.

Now, with Innersole's historical facts fresh in our minds, let us begin to re-examine the New Testament. In this day and age of television where we are privy to observe legal proceedings, we see how vital it is to carefully weigh the testimony given by witnesses. In doing so, it quickly becomes apparent that if two witnesses contradict each other, doubt is quickly raised as to the honesty of one. When more than one witness attests to the veracity of such evidence, the problem becomes exacerbated by challenging us to decide which one, if any, is telling the truth. I will now focus on whether the men who are credited with authorship of the gospels did indeed write the books that bare their names.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As I previously stated, Luke is the *only* apostle to report that an angel told Mary she would conceive. Matthew claims that the angel told Joseph, *not* Mary, and that the communication occurred during Joseph's *dream*. Both John and Mark make no mention of an angel. At the risk of being redundant, I repeat that Luke and Matthew provided genealogies, which I showed before, that attempted to trace Christ's ancestry back to King David. Why they both named Joseph instead of Mary remains a mystery

The story of Herod destroying all children that were less than two years of age appears only in Matthew. I find it odd that no other disciple mentions it because the event would have been so well known at the time that it could hardly be called an oversight. Matthew goes on to tell us that Jesus escaped that fate because Mary and Joseph fled with him to Egypt. However, John was under two at the time and she stayed behind. As it happens, John seems

to have fared just as well as Jesus, so the facts appear to contradict themselves.

In chapter 7:verse 45 of Matthew's report is so startling that the failure of the other three apostles to substantiate his claims raises serious doubts. I quote: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." Verse 42, 52 and 53, "And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." Mark makes no mention of any earthquake or of rocks rending and not a word of graves opening and dead men walking. Luke is also silent on all these "facts" and John says nothing about the darkness, the veil of the temple, the earthquake, the rocks, the opening of graves or dead saints climbing out of them. If the writers of these books really were the men they claimed to be and the report were true, it would be impossible *not* to have recorded it. Besides, an earthquake is a natural occurrence but dead Saints walking is a *Supernatural* happening which would have made major points for Christianity so it seems odd that no other apostle reported it.

Whoever is taking credit for Matthew's book puzzles us by providing only that one long sentence. He should have told us who the saints were. Were they men saints or women saints? Did they climb out dressed or were they naked? Did they return to their homes and carry on with their lives? Did they die again after that or did they simply climb back into their graves and wait to be buried again? Matthew was a tax collector and far too clever a man to pen a narrative in such a slipshod fashion. And if all the apostles had witnessed the earthquake (if there was one, because it's impossible to be absent from it), why didn't they all report it? Yet, the claim of many people seeing cadavers strolling through the city is far more important than the quake because it's *Supernatural* and should have filled entire chapters of the gospels. But, as we've seen, these writers fail to agree on these issues and can't even agree on the *time* of the Crucifixion. Mark says he was crucified on the third hour in the morning (9.am) and John says the sixth hour, which would be twelve o'clock noon.

But it is Matthew who continues to confound us with certain "facts" that no other apostle reports. He claims the following:

1. The tomb of Jesus was made safe by setting a stone over the opening and placing guards to stand watch.

2. The chief priests gave large sums of money to the guards to say that his disciples stole the body while they slept (how could the guards know *anything* if they were asleep?)

3. He adds this sentence, “The disciples stole him away is reported among the Jews *until this day*.” (Which, as I have shown before, implies a long period of time had passed before the *real* author wrote this sentence).

4. He continues, “Behold, there was a great earthquake and the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.” **Note:** No other apostle says anything about an earthquake or an angel rolling back the stone from the entrance to the tomb and sitting upon it. In fact, according to the other three there was *no* angel sitting there.

Mark says there was an angel *inside* the sepulcher sitting on the right, Luke says there were two, and both were standing and John says they were both sitting down; one at the head and one at the feet. Quite often, even when all witnesses agree, there may still be no guarantee of truth but when they *fail* to agree, something must be amiss.

John and Luke testify that after the resurrection Jesus met the eleven in a house in Jerusalem but Matthew says they all met at a mountain in Galilee. One can easily see that the evidence given by two destroys the credibility of all four. I could go on and on but I think the point has been made. There is so much disagreement between the alleged eyewitnesses that it seems unlikely that any of them were present at all. This evidence must be difficult to accept for those who have made a huge emotional investment in the gospels, but I believe the real apostles were honorable men so why would they create such obvious contradictions? How could they have failed to notice earthquakes or dead men walking-and more startling than that, they couldn't even agree on the few words inscribed above Christ's head? Wouldn't it be more rational to consider that unknown authors had written the books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?

Note: Who were Luke and Mark?

I previously stated that Luke and Mark were not members of Christ's *original* twelve Apostles. I shall now clarify that statement. A careful reading of the gospels reveals that each of the four books

contains a list of the original twelve members and nowhere on those lists do the names Luke or Mark appear. Even on the lists that they themselves allegedly wrote, those two names are absent. Then who were these two men that claimed to be eyewitnesses of all the events in the four gospels? Would the original apostles have failed to mention their own names? I grant you that they may have become later disciples of Jesus but they were not part of his original group. Then by what authority did they give Christianity four of its major foundations? Very significant is the fact that only Luke reported the following. I repeat:

1. The angel Gabriel telling Mary she would conceive.
2. The Immaculate Conception.
3. Christ's birth in the manger. (Matthew, an original member, says it was in their house.
4. Luke and Mark were the only ones to report the Ascension of Christ into Heaven.

That these two men did not write the books ascribed to them now seems certain; still there may be a reasonable explanation for the numerous contradictions we've encountered. The books that we presently call "the gospels" may not be the ones that were originally created. The art of printing is a relatively new process, having appeared only after Ben Franklin's printing press in the seventeenth hundreds; prior to that all documents were painstakingly copied by hand. If you've ever tried to copy anything, you can understand how easily errors can occur. Just imagine the difficulty that fallible human beings can encounter in copying the Old and New Testaments, in fact the entire Bible. Now multiply that by the thousands that were hand produced over the centuries and you can imagine the problems.

I hope the rational reader will recognize that I'm trying to fair by suggesting that coping errors might have caused the many affronts to God's character and morality that I've indicated, but I'm sure the religious folks will be angry with me anyway. Which prompts me to ask, is, "Is it God they are worshipping or is it the Bible?"

Before leaving the subject of the New Testament, which has always been regarded as *revealed* religion, I feel that a few words, on Revelation from another of my mentors would be appropriate. Here then, is Thomas Paine, the co-author of our Constitution.

REVELATION
By Thomas Paine

It is a contradiction in terms to call anything a revelation that comes to us second hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the *first* communication-after that it is only an account of what the first person says was revealed to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it in the same way; for it was not a revelation made to *me* and I have only his word that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he had received two tables from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. However, the declaration that God visits the sins of the father upon the children; is contrary to every principle of moral justice.

When I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven and brought to Mohammed by an angel, the account comes with the same kind of hearsay evidence and second hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel myself and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it. When I am also told that a woman called the Virgin Mary said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told him so-in a dream-I have the right to believe them or *not* to believe them because such circumstance requires much stronger evidence than just their bare word for it; but we don't even have that-for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote such thing themselves; it is only reported by others that *they* said so- it is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology still had some repute in the world, and that mythology prepared the people for a belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to the sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe that a man had been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was a matter of familiar opinion. Jupiter, according to their account, had cohabited with hundreds; therefore the story had nothing in it new, wonderful or obscene.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFEND THE SON

My aim up to this point has been to defend the reputation of "The Father." I shall now attempt to render equal protection for the "Son."

Throughout the Ages every religion has offered its believers the reward of-"living on after death". In ancient Egypt priests initiated "Mummification" as a passport to the "Afterlife". Hindu prelates promised "Nirvana" as a way for piety to escape the tedium of re-incarnation. In short, each faith pledges to cheat death by giving the faithful the prize of continuing to live on for eternity--and Christianity is no exception. This premise has become one of the most tenacious and unsettling concepts ever invented by man. The fear of death is so pervasive in the human mind that men will believe almost anything to deny the reality of ceasing to exist. Faith's objective is achieved by postulating that a benign Spiritual essence exists in the heavens above and a malevolent demonic phantom resides in the earth below. This fantasy is heightened by the promise of being "saved" in Paradise or the threat of being "damned" in Hell. Each culture achieves its end with the aid of a book written by men who claimed to "know" all about God. Fortunately, we live in America where freedom of religion gives us choices and if we choose to believe this myth that is our prerogative. But if we invest a good deal of ourselves in a bible, shouldn't we be certain that book represents God, as we believe God to be? Shouldn't it portray a Being of the highest, moral and ethical principles for man to worship? It should but as we've seen, our Bible fails to meet that objective. Instead, it presents a punitive god who is quick to anger, filled with terrible rage and showing little compassion for human fallibility.

I feel I have done my duty to God, as He is portrayed in the Old Testament, by refuting the libelous charges of Biblical authors who falsely accuse Him horrendous acts against all life forms. I now feel satisfied that our Creator has received due process. However, defending the deity of the New Testament requires a completely different presentation since the gospels depict a Personality that is the antithesis of Jehovah in compassion, love and tenderness. Nonetheless, I feel a defense is still necessary in light of certain disturbing precepts like Hell and Eternal Damnation that are incompatible with the sweet and forgiving nature of Jesus. I have therefore chosen to defend the "Son of God" by writing a short play, in which I shall address these terrifying concepts that have long marred the tranquility of Christian lives. The story is about an imaginary trial held in ancient Rome after the Crucifixion. All of the testimony presented during the course of these proceedings

can be verified by a careful reading of the four gospels. I call this little drama “The Trial of the Apostles”.

The Trial of the Apostles

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[Two years have passed since the Crucifixion. Four of Christ's Apostles have written gospels, which surfaced in Rome and caused a furor. The four were immediately arrested and brought to the Forum to stand trial. All Rome fears the possibility of more crucifixions]

Clerk

The Honorable Senators, Cassius, Marcus, Dimitrius and Augustus presiding. Be seated.

(Cassius bangs his gavel and calls for order. The spectators become hushed. The Prosecutor Libus and defense council Marcellus are seated in their respective places]

Cassius

Good morning Libus.

Libus

Good morning Senator.

Cassius

Good morning Marcellus.

Marcellus

Good morning, Senator.

Dimitrius

The Tribunal will now hear opening statements.

Libus

The State is ready Your Honor.

Marcus

Is the defense ready?

Marcellus

Senator, before we begin we must settle a matter of the oath.

Augustus

The oath, Marcellus? We have a problem?

Marcellus

My clients are not Romans, Sire and in all good conscience, they cannot swear an oath to Jupiter because they recognize Jehovah as God of the Jews.

Cassius

Hmm, heretics. Very well, then have them swear an oath to their god and let's get on with it.

Marcellus

Thank you Senator. The defense can now proceed.

Marcus

The clerk will administer the oath.

Clerk

Do you swear to your god that the testimony you give this court shall be the whole truth?

All

We swear in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Dimitrius

We'll hear opening statements at this time.

Libus

Citizens of Gaul, the State will prove that the prisoners are traitors to Rome. They committed treason by trying to place the Jew, whom our beloved Emperor Tiberius crucified two years ago, on the throne of the Roman Empire. These four men wrote gospels claiming that he was the Son of God, which raised a furor among the faithful. In addition, they claim to be eyewitnesses to all the events they've reported. In the interest of brevity, the State requests that the four prisoners testify together.

Marcellus

Objection! The request flaunts Roman protocol.

Augustus

Overruled Marcellus, we'll decide that. Request granted. Escort the prisoners into the witness box.

[The spectators murmur as soldiers herd Mark, Matthew, Luke and John into the witness box. Their feet are shackled making it difficult for them to walk]

Dimitrius

Let's have your opening statement now Marcellus.

Marcellus

Noblemen and good citizens of Rome. The charges presented by the State are false. No witnesses have come forward to corroborate the allegations. The defense will show that the prisoners acted in good faith as Apostles of the man from Nazareth.

[As Marcellus concludes, Libus approaches the witness box]

Libus

State your names and occupations.

Matthew

Matthew. Tax collector.

Luke

Luke. Doctor.

Mark

Mark. Fisherman.

John

John. We are all fishers of men, Sire.

Libus

Fishers of men, how quaint. Let me start with Luke whose gospel claims that from the beginning you all were eyewitnesses. He goes on to report that in the sixth month--let me quote: Chapter 1 verse 26: "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph". In Verse 32: the angel tells Mary she will bring forth a holy son "and his name shall be Jesus". You say she was espoused to this Joseph and still a virgin?

Luke

Gabriel appeared to Mary *before* she and Joseph came together.

Libus

Really? How long had the two been-espoused?

Marcellus

Objection to the snide innuendo, Your Honors.

Cassius

Sustained.

Libus

Who else reports this Angel Gabriel visiting Mary? (No reply) Only you make this assertion Luke? None of your colleagues mentions this visit?

Luke

No Sire. I alone reported that Gabriel told Mary.

Libus

Your Honors, please note that Matthew remains silent yet he too reported the incident.

Matthew

Yes, but I stated that the angel told Joseph not Mary.

Libus

Told Joseph? Hmmm. Allow me to quote from Matthew Chapter 1-verse 20: "Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying Joseph--".(stops) Joseph was not awake at the time?

Matthew

No sire. He was asleep.

Libus

This angelic visit you report, occurred in a dream?

Mathew

That is correct, Sire.

Libus

How can one know the content of another man's dream?

Marcellus

Objection. Calls for speculation.

Marcus

Sustained.

Libus

But Senators, my question has great relevance. This event is the very cornerstone of Christianity. Since Matthew claims that Mary did *not* receive the angel's visit and Joseph was dreaming, how can Matthew's report qualify as viable evidence?

Marcus

It can't, Libus. Dreams do not qualify as evidence. Matthew's report is considered "Hearsay". Only Luke's testimony is deemed relevant at the moment.

Libus

Then will the tribunal note that we've only just begun and already we have discrepancies?

Cassius

So noted. Continue please.

Libus

Which gospel reports the birth of Christ in the manger?

Luke

I report that glorious event, Sire.

Libus

Only you again Luke?

Matthew

Excuse me Sire. I report the star of Bethlehem and the wise men called the Magi.

Libus

Yes Matthew, but you state that Jesus was born in their house *not* in the manger and Luke makes no mention of a house or of this-Magi. Now which version is correct?

Luke

Mine Sire. As God is my judge, it was in the manger.

Matthew

I disagree, Sire, Jesus was born in their house.

Libus

Senators, another discrepancy for the record?

Dimitrius

Again noted, Libus. Continue please.

Libus

Was either of you men present at the time?

Matthew

I was not present.

Luke

And I was not born yet, Sire.

Libus

Then, Your Honors, is this not also considered hearsay?

Marcus

If neither man were present, the same rule applies.

Libus

But, neither man was present at the angel's visit either.

Augustus

Then "Hearsay" likewise applies in that case unless-substantiated by another witness.

Libus

I see. John, does your gospel report these events?

John

No Sire, mine does not.

Libus

Mark, does yours?

Mark

No Sire.

Libus

May I ask why not? Aren't those events crucial to Christianity?

Mark & John

Oh, most certainly Sire, very important indeed.

Libus

Then why have you two failed to mention them?

Mark & John

(Silence)

Libus

We'll come back to this later. Matthew, I'm fascinated by your report. You write that the moment Jesus died, wait-let me quote this exactly: Matthew verse 50: "And the graves were opened: and

many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many". Those are extremely powerful images you have described. Who else witnessed what Matthew reports? Luke? Mark?

Luke

Not I, Sire.

Mark

Nor I, Sire.

Libus

Come, come gentlemen, corpses strolling through the city? These are no everyday occurrences. (Silence) Senators, surely they must have noticed these wandering cadavers.

Marcus

You've made your point, Libus. Now move it along.

Libus

Mark. Tell us your recollections of the amazing events that Matthew describes.

Mark

I recall seeing nothing like that Sire.

Libus

You're testifying under oath that you recall no dead saints walking about the city? But Matthew claims they were "seen by many". Perhaps you were you watching something else at the time?

Marcellus

Objection, he's badgering the witness.

Dimitrius

Sustained, Marcellus.

Marcellus

Thank you, Senator.

Libus

But Senators, none of the witnesses corroborates Matthew's story.

Dimitrius

John has not testified to that effect.

Libus

John, tell us what you recall about these unusual happenings.

John

(Silence)

Libus

John? Senators, instruct the witness to respond.

Cassius

The witness will answer the question.

John

I say unto thee Senators, if what Matthew claims had actually occurred, I most certainly would not have failed to report it.

Libus

Then none of you can corroborate Matthew's claims?

John

Who knows Sire? Perhaps it happened-I do not recall.

Libus

You do not recall? Do you know your Ten Commandments, John?

John

I do not bear false witness!

Libus

I see you do know them.

John

Verily I do.

Libus

What is the fifth?

John

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Libus

Let me read how Matthew quotes Jesus: 10-37, "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me". Does that sound like honoring father and mother?

Matthew

But Sire. What the master meant by that--

Libus

A simple yes or no will suffice.

ALL

But the master was only—

Libus

Yes or no!

Marcellus

Objection! He's being hostile.

Marcus

Sustained.

Libus

Did Jesus ever write a word himself for his followers?

ALL

No Sire. The master wrote nothing himself. He instructed us to do so. We have written everything he said.

Libus

Then we have no alternative but to accept your words do we?

Luke

But we wrote what he taught.

Libus

Perhaps you wrote what you *thought* he taught.

Marcellus

Objection! They have already responded.

Augustus

Sustained! Libus, our patience is being strained.

Libus

Mine as well Your Honors, by Mark's report that Jesus rebuked a fig tree for being bare out of season-then cursed the tree for having no figs. Are we to believe that an intelligent being acted in that manner--toward a tree?

Mark

Tis the truth Sire. We all observed it.

Libus

You then write, "The tree withered away and died".

Mark

It, it did, Sire. We watched it happen.

Libus

What did your master say after that?

Mark

He said, "Have faith in God".

Libus

Hmm, perhaps it was only a fig-ment of your imagination Mark.
(The spectators laugh)

Marcellus

Objection! Senators, this is a court of law not a theater for amusement. The prosecution is making a mockery of this trial.

Cassius

Sustained!

Libus

It is I that makes a mockery? Then listen to this passage, Senators. The Apostles needed money to pay the tax collector so Jesus instructed Matthew--since you wrote 17:27 Matthew, you read it to the Tribunal.

Matthew

(reads)

"Lest we offend them, go thou to the sea and cast a hook and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: Take that and give it unto them for thee and me".

Libus

Do you expect this learned body to accept such an absurd story? Are we to believe that a wise teacher like Christ actually told you to do that?

Matthew

'Tis the God's truth Sire. I swear it!

Libus

Yes, of course, you swear it don't you? And John, you state that while Jesus was on the cross, one of our soldiers thrust a spear into his side and blood and water gushed out.

John

Thou art correct Sire. That is what I saw.

Libus

But your three colleagues make no mention of that. Who cares to substantiate John's testimony?

All Three

Sire, I recall no spear. Neither do I. Nor I Sire.

Libus

The three of you stood right next to John and neither of you saw blood and water spurting from the wound?

Matthew, Mark and Luke

I saw no wound. Nor a soldier thrust a spear, Sire. I saw neither blood nor water.

John

On my honor Senators, that is what I saw. God knows I do not lie.

Libus

Your friends don't seem to agree, John.

Marcellus

Objection. My client has implied no falsehood.

Cassius

Sustained. It might be wise to leave this now, Libus.

Libus

But Senators, this event cries out for confirmation.

Marcus

Abandon it!!

Libus

Very well, Sire. Matthew and John, you both report that eight days after the Crucifixion, Jesus walked through your closed door-and asked for food?

Matthew

Verily Sire. Thou art correct.

Libus

You're testifying that you actually saw him?

John

Yes Sire. He came to us in Galilee.

Matthew

That's not so. He came to us in Jerusalem.

Libus

No matter, but why did Mark and Luke fail to mention such an amazing happening?

Luke and Mark

Er, our only concern Sire was only with his hunger.

Libus

And that's why you didn't mention it? (They nod) Did you feed him?

Matthew and John

That we did Sire He brought us a fish. We had some honeycomb and a bit of meat. He was famished Sire.

Libus

Are these Senators to believe that after being dead for eight days he re-appeared and craved food?

John

'Tis true, Sire. He said unto us "Handle me and ye shall see I am flesh not spirit."

Libus

Wait. Let me understand this. You say he was flesh yet he walked through a closed door? He ate real food with you and Matthew says after eating he vanished right before your eyes. I imagine this the "Ascension" that Mark and Luke speak of?

Mark

No Sire, but both Luke and I reported the Ascension of Christ.

Libus

The Ascension is a crucial tenet of Christianity. Isn't that so, Matthew?

Matthew

Oh yes, verily Sire. Verily.

Libus

Do you agree John?

John

Indeed I do, Sire. Indeed.

Libus

Then please explain why both you and Matthew failed to mention it?

Matt & John

What? Oh, I believe we mentioned the Ascension. Did we not, Sire?

Libus

No. Not one word from you two. Luke and Mark are the only ones that reported it. Senators, I find it amazing that that Luke and Mark continue to report issues vital to Christendom while John and Matthew fail to even mention the Ascension of Christ. Furthermore, John claims that Jesus bore his own cross while Matthew, Mark and Luke all identify Simon the Cyrenian as the bearer. We continue to hear one contradiction after another. Whose testimony are we go believe?

Cassius

That is for us to decide, Libus. You know your task so move on.

Libus

Your Honors, I've read John and Matthew's manuscripts with great care and noticed that they both constantly refer to Hell and damnation.

John

T'is true Sire! For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son to save man from going to Hell.

Matthew

And he that believeth on Him that sent Christ shall not be condemned to Hell but shall receive everlasting life.

Libus

That is precisely what I mean! The two of you go on and on, allegedly quoting Jesus about Hellfire and Damnation. For example, (flipping through the pages) here! "If your right eye offend thee, pluck it out (mumbles) whole body be cast into Hell" And here again "Hell" and again "Hell." But you men are Jews; in fact all the Apostles are Jews and your master as well. You were raised on the Mosaic Code, so where would Jesus have learned about Hell? There's no mention of Hell in the five books of Moses. These aren't Christ's words, they're yours' aren't they? Be honest, he's not here to defend himself.

Both

Sire, we simply report what the master-----

Libus

Yes of course you do. And here again you make him say, "Hell, Damnation, Hellfire, Hell where the worm dieth not". Again, Hell, Damnation, and again and again! Both you and John quote Jesus, constantly dwelling upon Hell and Damnation. You make him seem obsessed by it, consumed with it. It hardly seems reasonable that one who loved so deeply and tried only to do good would want to frighten those who believed in him. You formerly testified he wrote no word of his own so we only have *your* gospels to rely upon. These are your frightening words aren't they? You still have time to recant your testimony.

Marcellus

Objection! This is despicable! I have never witnessed such blatant intimidation.

Libus

Senators, hear me out. When Pontius Pilate handled the Christ matter, I assumed the problem was resolved but when theses gospels surfaced in Rome, their blasphemy created such a firestorm that I had the prisoners arrested and brought to the Forum. I was convinced they were heretics and traitors to our Emperor, Tiberius Claudius Nero. But now I feel impelled to uncover the truth before we act too hastily once again. The whole purpose of this trial is to separate fact from fiction and, to be frank; I am finding it difficult to believe that a Being of such love and compassion could have this dual side to his nature. A man who forgave Sinners during life does not become a tyrant after death and pursue them beyond the grave to damn them to Hell. I reject the notion that Jesus was the author of Hell and Damnation and accuse John and Matthew of creating that concept. Senators,

grant me a moment more and listen to the words of the man we crucified.

“Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. Blessed be them that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed be the weak for they shall inherit the earth. If I, thy Lord and master, wash your feet ye ought to wash one another’s feet. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and lowly of heart and in me ye shall find rest unto your souls. The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life as a ransom for many. Resist not evil but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also and if a man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Judge not and ye shall not be judged, condemn not and ye shall not be condemned, forgive and ye shall be forgiven. Whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him. Love one another as I have loved you”.

Libus

Senators, there have been so many inconsistencies in the testimony we’ve heard today that we don’t even seem to be referring to the same man. Matthew and John depict Jesus almost as a split personality, which I find completely inconsistent with the words I’ve just read. I may be Rome’s Prosecutor but my concern is with the truth and justice. I intend to uncover it before we act too hastily and make another mistake! Can any of the prisoners name the *original* twelve Apostles of Christ?

Mark

Oh, yes, Sire, with the greatest of pleasure.
(Alternating as they help each other)

All Four

Let’s see, there was: Simon known as Peter; Bartholomew; James, brother of John; Simon the Caananite; James, or Jude, Son of Alpheus; Andrew; Philip; John; Matthew; Simon called Zeloites; Thomas and Judas Iscariot. Those are the twelve, Sire.

Libus

Each one of your gospels contains a list of the twelve names you’ve just mentioned and one other gospel called “Acts” also lists those twelve.

ALL

True, Sire, true.

Libus

Do the names Luke or Mark appear on any of those lists?

John and Matthew

(startled)

Why no, Sire they do not.

Libus

In the gospels that Luke and Mark themselves wrote, do their names appear on those lists?

Matthew and John

No Sire. They do not.

Libus

I ask the Tribunal to take judicial notice of this crucial evidence.
(The four Senators rise)

The Tribunal takes judicial notice.

Libus

Then would it be fair to say that both Mark and Luke were *not* members of the *original* twelve Apostles and therefore could not have been eyewitnesses to the events they reported?

Matthew & John

(reluctantly)

Yes Sire. It would seem so.

Libus

Members of the tribunal. In light of this incontrovertible evidence, the State moves that all the testimony of Mark and Luke be stricken from the record and declared to be “Hearsay”. Now, only the testimony of Matthew and John is relevant in this trial and they scarcely agree on anything. John reports Jesus bleeding on the cross and Matthew sees no blood; Matthew reports dead saints walking and John sees none. There can be only one resolution to this matter and that is for Your Honors to decide.

Cassius

The Tribunal revues these proceedings and will render its decision tomorrow morning. Take the prisoners away.

[Everyone is shocked into silence as the soldiers lead the four men out of the witness box].

The End

I need no longer have to defend Jesus since Libus did it so eloquently- but let me repeat his words: “A Being of such love and compassion who forgave Sinners during life does not become a tyrant after death and pursue them beyond the grave to damn them to Hell”.

CHAPTER 6

THE DEIST CONCEPTION

Before I explain the Deists’ faith, let me digress and offer a few more thoughts from my mentor, Thomas Paine.

Thomas Paine, one of the authors of our constitution has been a great influence on me in my Theological thinking. A Deist by faith, as were Jefferson, Franklin and other of our founding fathers, Paine was hounded on his deathbed by the priesthood of his day to recant his beliefs under the threat of Hell and Eternal Damnation. Despite the opinion of today’s clergymen, Paine was a very religious man, if by that term we mean having a strong conviction in the existence of God. He addressed the following words to those who believed that the only way to recognize our Creator was through the Holy Bible. Let me add that Paine wrote this without any knowledge of the clergy’s unseemly behavior that has plagued the religious community of our day.

I will quote Mr. Paine verbatim and though the language of the 1700’s is somewhat antiquated, I believe the essence of his message will come through:

“Ye priests of every description what have ye to say now? With all the this mass of evidence against you, and staring you in the face, will ye still have the assurance to march unto your pulpits and continue to impose these books upon your congregations as the works of *inspired* men and the works of God, when it is as evident as demonstration can make truth appear, that the persons who ye say are the authors of the Bible were *not* the authors and ye know not who the authors are. What shadows of pretence have ye now to produce for continuing the blasphemous fraud? What have ye still to offer against the pure and moral religion of Deism, in support of your system of falsehood, idolatry and extended revelation? Had the cruel and murderous rulers with which the

Bible is filled, and the number of torturous executions of men women and children, in consequence of those orders, been ascribed by some fiend whose memory you revered, you should have glowed with satisfaction at detecting the falsehood of the charge, and glorified in defending his injured fame. Is it because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or feel no interest in the honor of our Creator that ye listen to horrible tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference? My words will wound the priest but they shall relieve and tranquilize the minds of millions and free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty which priest craft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of moral justice and benevolence.”-Unquote.

Thomas Paine's words were written centuries before there was a gay Bishop or child molesters in the clergy. In the event that some readers react indignantly to his words, I hope they can be open enough now to learn something about the true and peaceful religion of Deism.

THE CONCEPT OF DEISM

Most people spend their entire lives occupied exclusively with happenings on this planet, almost oblivious to the incredible system that surrounds us. I realize that many are too busy making a living to find much time to think about the universe but the Deist finds a different path leading to God by asking the key question: “How is it possible to know the Creator without first understanding His creations?” Unless we become fairly conversant with the mechanics of the universe, we will continue to see God *only* as a figure to grant wishes in our mundane and insignificant lives. Einstein's famous quote, “God doesn't shoot craps with the universe” implies a sense of *order and stability* to that wondrous structure of which our earth is merely a miniscule dot. The Deist finds proof God's existence in all the wonders of Creation itself. How he would scoff at the account of God stopping the sun from setting for twenty-four hours to give a man more time to kill his enemies. The earth would have to stop rotating in order to produce such a Biblical miracle and after twenty-four hours its machinery would be required to start up again.

We all ponder the mystery of who or what invented such an unusual system as the universe? Was it truly the design of some omnipotent Being that we of the west call Jehovah or Jesus? Was it Osiris, as the ancient Egyptians believed, or Jupiter of the

Romans, Zeus of the Greeks or any of the hundreds of deities of religions long dead? No matter what created the universe or by which name it was called, the gift of *reason* was bestowed upon only one species, man. But even reason can be deceiving when illusions are present, so for millennia our forebears labored under the assumption that the sun orbited the earth, which is quite understandable because it sure looks that way, even from our perspective today. Our conditioning as Earthlings presents many illusions that have led us to regard matter as the primordial substance and space as that bit of empty sky overhead. But despite all illusions, *space* is the primary substance and matter appears to be randomly scattered throughout the universe. We may be “too close to see the forest”, yet we’re quite capable of *imagining* the enormity of the system and the awesome distances that lie between celestial objects.

The sun, upon which our entire solar system depends, is a *star* and every star in the heavens is a *sun*. Our five billion year old sun, which is the source of all life on earth, is a relatively small and weak star. Not even a million miles in diameter and ninety three million miles distant, it radiates such heat and light, that we flock to our beaches to enjoy its beneficence. But old Sol is far from benign. It is a powerful nuclear furnace that spews into space-four thousand *tons* of its own mass every *second*. Even at that staggering rate of consumption, it is calculated to last almost fifteen billion more years before it dies, as all stars eventually do. Such power boggles the mind and yet, stars exist that are four hundred times bigger than our own. By estimates of leading astronomers, our Milky Way galaxy contains over four hundred *billion* stars. The closest one to our own is Alpha Centauri, which lies four light *years* away. How can the mind begin to fathom a light year? Let’s stop for a moment and think about it.

On earth, we travel about seventy-five miles an hour as we barrel down the highways in our modern chariots. Jet planes break the sound barrier at 750 miles per hour. Astronauts soar through zero gravity at 25,000 mph, but light travels 186,000 miles per *second*! Light can circle the world seven times in less than one second or go to the moon and back in a second and a half. Now imagine the actual mileage that light will travel in *four years* and that would get us to Alpha Centauri, the closest star to our own.

Our sister galaxy, Andromeda, is almost a twin of the Milky Way and lies at a distance of 2.2 *million* light years away. When we look at Andromeda in our nighttime sky, we are actually looking back

into the past because the light that left that galaxy has taken 2.2 million years to arrive here. If a cataclysmic disaster annihilated Andromeda tonight, that event wouldn't be seen on Earth for another 2.2 million years. And if Alpha Centauri died this evening, its death wouldn't be visible for the next four years. When we look up into the heavens, we are seeing celestial objects that may no longer be there at all. Once we can *truly* comprehend the magnitude of the universe, we may begin to form a new concept of God, one that is *grander* and more *awesome* than any scriptural narrative ever conceived by man. The Bible writers simply state that God created the universe in seven days. Without the knowledge we possess today, can we blame the ancients for being unable to envision such a fantastic structure?

Modern astronomers had already recorded the existence of four hundred billion *galaxies* prior to the deployment of the Hubble telescope. With the aid of that remarkable instrument, they can now see seventeen times further than was formerly possible and, what do you suppose they see beyond? Right! *More* galaxies. In fact, only recently we discovered a galaxy that is one billion light years away. By photographing that object we are looking at almost the beginning of time itself. So, where is the end of the universe and what lies beyond that? According to Einstein there is no end. Space, as he predicted, is curved and irrevocably bound up with time. Bibles of every culture, past as well as present, couldn't begin to explain the mysteries of the universe.

Then what explains the tenacious grip that religion has held on all mankind? The answer to that question is obvious. It's the fear of what may happen *after* death and the yearning to continue to live on. Everyone is afraid of the unknown but fear it or not, we shall all reach the end of our visit in *this* world, so while piety dreams of the *next*, the Deist pays homage to hard reality. Every individual the world over, regardless of creed, can clearly see the existence of God by using his five senses and simply observing Creation. The evidence is clear to all of us and there is one feature of this discipline called Deism that is found in no other religion- it's not possible to be an Atheist.

I invite you to take a good hard look at the God of Deism for this may well be the turning point of all philosophies. Here is the god of the Universe that doesn't care about your denomination, whether you're circumcised or not, wear the Star of David or a Crucifix or rely upon the Bible. This god doesn't play favorites for we are all his creations, every man, woman, babe, animal, plant and element

that exists. Yes, I admit that this same god visits terrible natural disasters upon us but also spreads beneficent abundance on the entire world-and does it *without intent*. Do the scriptural deities give beasts any special privileges so they don't kill and devour each other? It's survival of the fittest in the jungles and unfortunately, in life as well. There is one drawback however, which may have already have struck some of you-and many won't like; this deity is not a **personal** God. It can't promise you Eternal Life in Paradise but it won't damn you to Everlasting Hell either. Nor will it coddle you by listening to your troubles or grant your fervent wishes. This is the *Universal* god of reality that insists you be mature enough to play the hand that life deals you. Therefore, look real hard because accepting this deity requires a courageous heart. This is the "God of *Creation* and you were *not* made in his image. Man is no more special in the scheme of things than any other creature, just different. No, I can't prove that one billion Christians are mistaken; no one can. I can't prove that the Jews and the Muslims are wrong; no one can. But we can all use our "God given gift" of reason and common sense when Scripture that tells us that God focuses upon *one* species out of a hundred and twenty five thousand on this planet-and perhaps on a plurality of worlds-and parts the waters of the River Jordan just to let one old man cross.

SUPERSTITION

Superstition is a powerful adversary that has plagued man since he first appeared on earth. He still fails to recognize that the God of Creation provided universal laws that have remained constant since the beginning itself. Religion reflects the conceit of man, designed to convince him that he is something special. In exchange for this ego gratification, he pays the heavy price of fear and mental subjugation. *Natural* law is immutable and constant. It has never changed for the beasts that have roamed this planet since time began. No wild creature has ever been haunted by the ghosts of animals it has killed and eaten. Why then should the Creator's laws be broken in respect to man?

As a confirmed Deist, I need not be concerned with a wrathful god that kills babies and commits brutal carnage nor a "loving" and gentle one either that sends those who fail to believe on him to eternal damnation. I leave those gods to the religious folks who unquestioningly accept the cruel and heartless stories of the Bible without any proof of who wrote them. With God in my heart I am content to recognize His existence through the wonders of Creation itself. The clever men who observe His incredible works continue to

devise wonderful gifts for mankind to warm him in winter and cool him in summer while creating fabulous technologies for his comfort, health and security. Despite their ingenuity, they are not the inventors of those marvels, for all the progress that man has made in his tireless journey to a better life, those gifts were always there waiting to be discovered. We can't even dream of the wonders that await us if we are wise and obey God's *natural* laws. Religion says that fear of the Lord is wisdom but there is no need to fear the Deist's god for science will eventually learn to control him. Take Albert Einstein for example:

Einstein, also a Deist, was called upon during World War 2 to create an atom bomb, which would allow us to end the conflict with Japan. Raised by simple Jewish parents who were very orthodox, Albert, at an early age decided that all the stories in the Bible could not be true. Instead, he believed that the god of Creation could be controlled if one knew the right "password."

Einstein's password was mathematics and by the use of the proper formula he made that god give him the bomb.

This god is not a tyrant that wants men to tremble before him. He does not need to murder himself in order to make men feel guilty. Though his might is beyond comprehension, he will not subjugate the human race as the Biblical deities have. Despite the awesome power he wields, he prefers that we realize, "it is not God that men fear it is only the *silence*". When will we stand like free men with our heads held high and heed his counsel? He cautions us now to control global warming and over population lest eventually we perish and still we refuse to listen.

All organized religions have their Bibles and their deities and all disagree. They have held man in bondage since he emerged from the caves. It is time to find our own *personal* faith and open our hearts and minds to the god of Creation. The future is in our hands and all that's required is plain common sense and the acceptance of reality.

Note: I should like to comment further on this strictly human phenomenon called *superstition*. It appears that mankind has been unable to rid itself of this mental cancer. Though I'm certain that countless people will disagree with me, I believe that a great many of the biblical concepts we treasure belong in this category, and since no absolute way to substantiate their validity exists, in my opinion we would all be better off to give up the following beliefs:

The Garden of Eden, the mud man and rib woman and the walking snake. The apple, the fall of man, the expulsion, and the gate guarded by angels armed with swords; the great flood, the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. Abraham and the wrestling match between Jacob and the Lord, the story of Joseph, the enslavement of Hebrews by the Egyptians, the story of Moses in the bulrushes, the burning bush, the turning of sticks into serpents and water into blood, the miraculous creation of frogs, the killing of cattle with hail and changing dust into lice. The sojourn of forty years in the desert, the parting of the Red Sea, the clothes and shoes that refused to wear out, the manna, the quails, the serpents and the water that ran uphill. The talking of Jehovah with Moses face to face, the giving of the Ten Commandments, the opening of the earth to swallow the enemies of Moses, the blowing of horns could not throw down the walls of a city, the day was not lengthened and the moon stopped for the sake of Joshua. The dead Samuel was not raised by a witch, a man was not carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, the river Jordan was not divided by the stroke of a cloak, the bears did not destroy children for laughing at a prophet, a wandering soothsayer did not collect lightening from heaven to destroy the lives of innocent men and he did not cause rain and make iron float, Ravens did not keep a hotel where preachers got board and lodging free, the shadow on the sundial did not turn back ten degrees to show that a king was going to recover from a boil, Jonah did not take cabin passage in a fish. The miracles of the Old Testament are not allegories or poems but just plain fantasies. There never was a miraculous babe without a natural father. Jesus Christ never cast devils out of folks. He did not cure blindness with spittle and clay, nor turn water into wine, nor make fishes or bread out of nothing. He did not know where to catch fishes with money in their mouths. He did not walk on water and he did not at will become invisible. He did not walk thorough closed doors; he did not rise from the dead and did not ascend into heaven.

EARLY BELIEFS

Despite all my criticism I'm sure the Biblical authors weren't intentionally dishonest since they reported what they believed to be true-but they weren't very enlightened either. When they claimed it took God seven days to create the earth, we can overlook their lack of knowledge. When they stated "He made the sun on the third day", they had no idea that the world couldn't exist without it. When they casually tossed off, "He also made the stars," they had no idea that the sun *was* a star and that there were

hundreds of billions of them. They were also convinced that the sun revolved around the earth, a theory that would have to wait for Copernicus to disprove. Neither is it hard to understand that they thought the earth was flat because centuries later, Columbus's crew thought the same thing. Bishop Usher calculated that from the date of Adam and Eve's arrival the world was six thousand years old. How could the good Bishop even dream that Earth came into being almost five billion years ago? When Biblical writers reported that Methuselah's lifespan was nine hundred years and that a man survived in the belly of a whale without being digested, it was understandable for them to make such mistakes because Science hadn't yet arrived. Were it not for the scientific method, we too, might still believe such "facts". So, just because it's in the Bible should we also blindly believe the things they wrote about God?

We live in the 21st century where science and technology have worked *real* miracles but if folks still choose to believe these fairy tales, this is a free country and it is certainly their prerogative to do so.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELIGIONS

Religions have played a major role in every age and every culture. The practice has been with us since humans first evolved on this planet. Man was always troubled by the mystery and finality of death and Religion attempted to supply an answer. Since no way exists to prove its conclusions, the Religious premise must be taken on faith. In this chapter, we will look at various theologies of both past and present and examine the origins of man's numerous belief systems.

PRIMAL RELIGION

To understand how the original notion of a god began, we must travel back in time to the earth, as it existed when humans made their initial appearance. The dawn of spirituality began with Early Man who stared at his surroundings and wondered who, or what, had created everything that his survival depended upon. Surrounded by predators and threatened by the hostile forces of nature, he devised rituals hoping to gain power over his environment. His first response was a belief in magic. Anthropologists have dubbed this primary form of religion, "Sympathetic Magic". Its purpose was to mimic nature by trying to

duplicate similar effects found in natural phenomena. For example, observing that rats had strong teeth, men began to eat rats hoping to gain similar tooth strength; noticing that bears were physically powerful, they ate bears to gain their power, and so on. Primitive Man practiced this form of magic for Eons until it gradually began to dawn on him that he wasn't getting the results he had hoped for. As winter approached and the days grew shorter, he worried that the sun was leaving and the fearful darkness would soon engulf him. Using sympathetic magic during the Winter Solstice, tribes hurled flaming branches into the nighttime sky in the vain attempt to re-ignite the sun and keep it from leaving. The sun therefore, became the first object of worship

But it was always death that troubled him the most and when a fellow hominid died, the tribes rubbed the body with red clay hoping to restore the pink blush to the lifeless corpse. More Eons passed before a new thought occurred to some perceptive individual. "What if somebody (or something else) was controlling everything?" That was the beginning of a new concept and, shortly thereafter, man started to propitiate the spirits, who he now believed animated nature. Early Man believed in spirits of trees and grass, of sky and water, plants and animals and every aspect of nature. Primitive Man imagined that an invisible "Spirit World" was controlling everything so he created more rituals to appease the spirits and began entreating them to send him animals that were the staple of his diet. This is the origin of Totems, which each tribe invoked to insure success during the hunt. More rituals became a necessity for winning favor of the spirits and great care was taken to avoid offending them and incurring their anger. Man has always feared the "wrath of the gods" in his quest for survival. In this regard, Prehistoric Man was no exception.

Continuing to worship the sun gave rise to another phase in religious evolution, the spawning of Sun Gods that were highly honored by Pagan cultures. While many Pagans continued to recognize the existence of the Spirit World, both genders were now included in their celestial Pantheon, and the more primitive Pagan societies sacrificed innocent virgins to appease their gods and goddesses. These sacrifices were condoned by the entire society, convinced that the ritual would insure the protection of the gods. Then, in later culture, along came an Egyptian Pharaoh named Ahknaten with a revolutionary new idea. It was the concept of "One God" and religious worship was never the same again. The Egyptians had to abandon their former religion of Animism and accept Ahknaten's new theory. But one god or many, the motivation behind faith has always been the same. Paradoxically

though it may seem, worship was originally designed to mollify man's fear of God.

The "Spirit World" gradually gave way to the "Ahknaten's theory" and evolved into the form of worship that is practiced by modern man.

HINDUISM

The Hindu Religion is one of the oldest Theologies on the planet and at the helm sits the god Brahman. Because of the tenet of reincarnation, it is impossible to debate with a Hindu disciple. Should anyone claim that Christ or Jehovah is the one true God, the Hindu devotee will quickly agree. However, he will declare that Brahman shows his many faces to the world as all the gods and that each face is merely another incarnation of Brahman. The Hindu also believes in many other deities including Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganeesh, Kali and three hundred million lesser gods. When a pious Hindu has proven himself worthy, after a number of reincarnations, he may finally reach Nirvana where his soul will find peace and eternal rest.

BUDDHISM

The most fascinating religion is Buddhism, which boasts well over a billion followers. Do all the world's religions offer the same "judgments of God" for our behavior, namely the rewards of Heaven or the torments of Hell? Most of them, I'm sorry to say, do. Yet, there is one that resembles no other faith, and that one is Buddhism. Buddhists are faithful to the Buddha but is the Buddha a god? And is Buddhism a religion, in the way we of the west interpret faith? Although the world accepts it as a religion, the one thing that sets Buddhism apart from all the rest is that it has no god. To understand this phenomenon, we must explore the myth that spawned that great Eastern philosophy.

The Buddha, as he is referred to, was not a god but a mere mortal named Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni. He was born a Prince in the palace of his father. The King decreed that his son should be raised in the palace behind its cloistered walls. As he grew, he wondered about the society that lay just outside the grounds. Never permitted to venture into the town nor mingle with the peasants who inhabited his father's kingdom, he learned nothing about life, as it existed in his country. Associating only with the privileged members of court, he gained no knowledge of the daily lives of the people he would someday rule.

Disquieted by the reality denied him by his position, he developed an intense desire to discover what the subjects of his father's realm were experiencing. He devised a plan to disguise himself and venture forth into the village where he would live amongst the common people. One night, while everyone slept, he slipped out of the palace and entered the city. His aim was to find out how the average citizen existed. Upon seeing that suffering and unhappiness was the legacy of humanity, he realized that he must seek enlightenment in order to help his people. Dedicated to finding wisdom, he sat down under a Bo tree and vowed not to return to royal life until he had discovered the secret of enlightenment which he could then endow upon his subjects. And, there he remained, focusing all his attention upon his goal until his goal could be achieved.

The myth does not tell us how long he sat there, but his focus was so intense, that he shut out all thought save that of finding enlightenment. At long last, a beautiful lotus flower sprouted from his seat, signaling him that he had found the wisdom he sought in order to help all humanity. Myths are always symbolic, but the wisdom Siddhartha had found, eventually eased the suffering of his subjects and touched more than a billion hearts throughout the Asian continent.

His odyssey to enlightenment gave Buddhism its "Four Truths" and "Eight Noble Paths" which is accepted as the cornerstone of its philosophy. The "Four Truths" relieved his peoples' suffering, and the "Eight Noble Paths" eased their troubled lives. It is wisdom indeed, and while the Eastern world has embraced it, it seems unlikely that the Western mind has the discipline to adopt its dogma. One of the "Noble truths" offered by Gautama, suggests, "Surrender the things you want that are "not in your best interests." There is no doubt that this is genuine wisdom but what society would follow such a noble truth? If it could, would the world have its wars, drug problems, Aids, rapes, murders and myriad of other horrors with which mankind is constantly plagued? Many engage in pursuing their desires despite consequences to health and safety. When the results are catastrophic, regret, anxiety and depression follow. Sometimes, those who believe their behavior to be innocuous are driven to suicide in the attempt to escape their dilemma. Panic and guilt are almost always spawned by self-destructive impulses that man refuses to curb.

But the most fascinating aspect of Buddhism is, that while extremely principled in morality, it recognizes no deity. The realization that a belief system, embraced by a billion adherents, can be so lofty in its values without a god at the helm is a great paradox. And, yet, Buddhists are not considered Atheists by other cultures. They observe rituals and tenets indigenous to other forms of worship. They have their temples, priests, icons and even a Bible, yet their mythology recognizes The Buddha--to whom they do pray--as the very mortal Prince, Siddhartha. Strange though it may seem, religion can exist and flourish without a godhead.

HEBREW

Paying homage to God through Scripture has not always yielded the purest moral image that one could hope for. The "Holy" Bible, which is the cornerstone of The Judaic-Christian faith, meticulously describes the gruesome origin of the Hebrew Religion. Fresh blood of slaughtered animals was poured over "holy" sacrificial altars throughout the tabernacle of the wandering tribes of Israel. Gore literally drenched the Tabernacle in which "sacred" services were held but the interior was splendidly fashioned of gold, silver and precious stones that were "despoiled" from the Egyptians on God's orders (So saith Moses). The first tribal priests were Moses' brother Aaron and his sons for generations to come. They burned the flesh of bullocks, lambs, turtledoves and other livestock to provide "a pleasing savor to the Lord." The priests initiated Peace Offerings, Wave Offerings, Sin Offerings, Heave Offerings and Trespass Offerings as payment for infractions of the Mosaic Code. Two millennia later, the Virgin Mary, being a Jewess, had to bring a Sin offering to the Priests to be made "clean" again after the birth of Christ. So demeaning was motherhood during antiquity because of the archaic taboo against blood.

CHRISTIANITY

The advent of Christianity officially began after the Crucifixion by the followers of Jesus. The original Church of Christ was spawned by terror and torture. The Auto de Fe, better known as "The Inquisition", took the lives of thousands that refused to accept Jesus as the "Son of God". In order to make converts, priests poured hot molten lead into their ears and tightened ropes around their heads until their skulls burst. Men and women alike were placed upon the rack and slowly stretched until their arms and legs were torn from their sockets. The only way that victims could stop the horror was to recant and swear that they accepted Christ.

History clearly records that these Inquisitions took place in many different lands and that conversions were made in the most ruthless fashions, but with the passage of time such bestiality seems to have been almost entirely forgotten.

MORMONISM

This religion is the youngest theology practiced in modern times. Ancient prophets that believed in revelation created the Mormon religion. According to the current belief, their words were written on golden plates, which a more recent prophet, named Mormon, translated into their Scripture. The story goes that Mormon's son, Nephi, died and was resurrected and deified. Nephi then sent the angel, Moroni to deliver the golden plates to Joseph Smith, and his associate Brigham Young.

The faith traces its roots to two civilizations known as the Nephites and the Lamanites, both were Semitic and stemming from more ancient peoples that once built the Tower of Babel. The Mormon Bible chronicles the second coming of Jesus Christ who appears to the American Indians because the Lamites claimed to be the direct descendants of the native tribes.

While none of the Mormon premise can be substantiated, we do know that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were involved in the occult. If a "prophet" appeared today and announced that he was a practitioner of "the Occult", do you suppose he would he attract many supporters? Well, strangely enough, the "Church of the Latter Day Saints" has become one of the fashionable and respected Theologies of our day and growing steadily.

ISLAM

The faith of Islam uses the Koran as its Holy Scripture and not many Americans are familiar with its contents. The book in many respects is rather similar to our western Bible, containing many of the same Patriarchal characters and fables of the Old Testament. Allah is the god Jehovah-known by a different name-and Mohammed is the prophet of the Muslim people, just as Moses is venerated as the prophet of the western world.

The Islamic faith had not yet been created as the first book of Moses begins. In Genesis we learned of a "Sacred "Covenant" made between God and Abraham. We probably already know that that Abraham was the husband of Sarah, who the Bible tells us was barren. Sarah entreats Abraham to impregnate her brown-skinned handmaid saying, "that I may have my children by Hagar". A boy

is born of the union and named Ishmael but not long afterwards, Sarah becomes resentful and orders her husband to abandon Hagar and Ishmael in the desert. He dutifully obeys and soon their pitiful sobs are heard up in Heaven. God comes down to investigate (as if He wasn't aware) and upon learning what transpired, makes a "Sacred Covenant" with Hagar and her son to create a new peoples from the seed of Ishmael. The Hebrew god Jehovah promises them a population as vast as the "grains of sand on the beaches". It is this covenant that Genesis identifies as the origin of Islam, which sprung from the loins of the Jewish Patriarch, Abraham. Moses, who was not even born then, is the alleged author of this story and since neither he, nor anyone else, witnessed God's Covenants, how the Bible came by this information remains a mystery.

In the New Testament, the same god that made the Covenants with Abraham and Ishmael sends the Angel Gabriel to a Jewish virgin in Bethlehem to announce the birth of "His Son". Three religions, all-vying for the approval of the same Father, can initiate a multitude of conflicts, especially if the father shows the slightest trace of favoritism. So, what emotions would one expect to be plucked in these "children of God" when the Lord infers that the Jews are His "chosen people"? If this did not appear in the Bible, it may have spared a good deal of animosity towards Jewish people the world over, discrimination and hostility they continue to experience because of it. It seems that planets can remain in orbit without a Heavenly Father's constant approval but not human beings. Is it possible that these Biblical Covenants made between Abraham, Ishmael, Mary and Jehovah backfired and caused 9-11, America's second "Day of Infamy"? Despite three covenants made by the same god, man's intolerance of his brothers goes on. History chronicles Islam and Christianity frequently conducting Holy Wars against each other and currently Muslim Fundamentalists seem hell bent upon the destruction of Israel. It is absurd to even consider that our Creator precipitated this entire man-made madness.

A FEW RELATED THOUGHTS

Egypt was constantly invaded by fierce tribes, known as the Hiksos people who dwelt in the craggy regions of the Tigris and Euphrates. They coveted the Nile River, which overflowed its banks yearly, inundating the fertile valley below and never failed to produce lush crops in great abundance. Each time the tribes invaded, they were subdued and scores of prisoners were taken. The Hiksos were an extremely persistent people, driven by the

dream of living in an environment that was the antitheses of their sparse homeland. Twice before they had been successful in their pursuit and occupied Egypt briefly. Ultimately, the Egyptians prevailed and brought back scores of prisoners to serve as slaves. Soon their numbers swelled and began to pose a serious threat to the country. The Pharaoh knew he had to get them out of Egypt so he commissioned his grandson (who was found in the bull rushes by the Princess) to lead the Hiksos slaves out of Egypt and into the desert. Biblical authors later claimed that this was the Exodus of the Hebrews led by Moses. The event became the cornerstone of Judaism.

Extremely significant is the fact that the Egyptians left a detailed, hieroglyphic account of their history and nowhere does it mention the "Exodus" or that "Hebrews" were ever held in bondage. In addition, they left no report of the Nile turning into blood, the many plagues that allegedly decimated the country or the slaying of the first born of every Egyptian family. None of these events appear in Egyptian history, they are chronicled *only* in the Bible.

Note: All Religions are "Belief Systems", which means they can be altered by the acquisition of new and compelling information. But precisely how has Religion continued to hold such a grasp on the mind? The answer may be found in the following section, which I call "Parental programming".

HYONOSIS IN RELIGION---PARENTAL PROGRAMMING

We all have parents and each of us has been "hypnotized" by them to a certain extent. This idea may seem incredulous at first because the process occurs in such a natural manner. In this case the parent is the "hypnotist", the child is the "subject" and religious beliefs constitute some of the suggestions that the parents make. Perhaps the word "suggestion" seems a bit too clinical-so let's say "imitation" or even "copy" because initially, that's how we learn. We copy or imitate our parents and then others we later encounter. Day after day as we grow, we re-enforce the messages we've received from mom and dad, practically since birth. "I am a Catholic", says one; "I am a Jew", says another, "a Protestant, a Methodist, a Moslem" and so forth, and yet we seldom ask ourselves why? The answer is so academic there seems to be no need to inquire. "I am a Catholic because my mother/father were Catholics". I am a Jew for the very same reason. We identify with our parents through the suggestions they make to us. These messages need not be overt because we can receive them subliminally from observing their behavior. One stern

look of disapproval can have as potent an effect as a lecture. Noticing their demeanor in a house of worship can reveal their level of religiosity. Do they seem to be at ease with their god or do they appear obsequious and fearful? We incorporate all these signals and frequently, even wear the symbols of their faith to help us feel a sense of belonging. One may wear a Star of David, another display a Crucifix, others completely cover her faces or heads- and as we age, the original suggestions enter the Limbic system of our brains and become deeply ingrained habits that feel comfortable and natural to us. So natural in fact, that it never occurs to us that we may be following a form of post-hypnotic suggestion. This does not imply that we walk around in a trance, only that our beliefs are unconsciously re-enforced on a daily basis.

As our small world widens and society becomes more meaningful, we discover that most folks share this “suggested-religiosity”. That discovery condones the practice and adds a strong sense of legitimacy to the state we’re in. But the final realization that sets it in stone is when we learn that highly respected individuals like government officials, Priests, Rabbis, our own Presidents and even the Pope himself, all agree that the religious information fed to us with mother’s milk was valid. The original Parental Suggestions become a tenacious habit that lasts for most, if not all, of our lives. “Habit” may seem a strange word to describe a person’s faith but that’s exactly what it is-a post-hypnotic habit! Perhaps that may explain why each religion believes with equal fervor in a different god.

Let’s take a close look at a person that is hypnotized. He or she will behave in almost any manner that the hypnotist suggests to her. While she sincerely believes that the suggestions are her own thoughts, she will accept ideas for which there is no sensory evidence of reality. In other words, she can be made to believe that something exists which she cannot see, touch, smell, hear or taste. Conversely, she can also be made to “see” and “hear” things that do *not* exist. “Happenings” that are frequently reported as religious experiences meet these criteria. The “belief” is genuine even if the event is not. Tests have shown that certain suggestions are short lived while others have been known to last for years. Religion is of the long lasting type, often persisting for a lifetime, which may explain why many people-who are quite rational in other aspects of life-continue to believe the outlandish claims of Scripture.

If we examine several different religions we would have to concede that all of them could not be true, yet the adherent of each would

insist that only his was valid. He is convinced that his god is the only true god-while all the others are false. And he might even defend his belief with his very life, as many have often done and still do. What is it that makes religion so delicate a subject that it can seldom be discussed without powerful emotions surfacing? What puts people on the defensive about it? And lastly, exactly what is it that they are defending? It is my opinion that most of the time it turns out to be the values of mom and dad. In essence, criticizing the cherished beliefs of someone's parents *feels* like criticizing his parents. Pleasing our folks is almost a universal phenomenon, which many continue even after the parents are no longer alive. The hypnotic process therefore, may explain the tenacity and persistence of faith.

"Parental suggestion" is a two-edged sword that can stimulate one's curiosity or create a state of indifference. Some parents are too stringent in their beliefs and can unintentionally create problems for their offspring. Suggestions containing threats like those of Hell and Damnation imprint the mind with such powerful stimuli that later adult reasoning often fails to expunge them. Believe me because I've been there. Only the use of common sense and the acquisition of *compelling* new information can change a belief system.

I'm saddened to realize that despite the many cultures that preceded us, the best that man has been able to come up with thus far is a book that portrays God as a ruthless and immoral mass murderer, filled with violence, hypocrisy and magic. I wish our ancestors could have left us a better legacy.

MIRACLES

As a Deist I recognize the existence of God through His handiworks and observe His power in each element of Creation. I see God in every snowflake, cloudburst, sunset and even in earthquakes and volcanoes. If we don't learn how to observe Him we will never see God at all-and in my opinion, I'm convinced that the last place to find Him is in a book. My little dog, Maxi, is as much of a miracle to me than any human being, star, planet or flower. I am extremely devout as any of "the faithful", with the one exception that I find my evidence in Creation rather than Holy Writ. So, I ask myself, "Why does religion need to create outlandish events in order to classify them as miracles?" The Bible qualifies something as a miracle only if a law of nature is broken. But *Natural* law is miraculous enough if we stop and think about

it. Men can now go into space and walk upon the surface of the moon. Man-made crafts can land on, and investigate Mars and Saturn. Doesn't that qualify as a manifestation of the miraculous? Each time a nuclear bomb is detonated a miniature *sun* is created. Isn't that like a miracle in itself? So, why is it then that in order for the Bible to call an event a miracle, some law of nature must be broken, or at least suspended? Scripture tells us that on three separate occasions, God stopped the sun from setting for twenty-four hours. Once: to give a Jewish army more daylight to slay its enemies, again to allow the Prophet Isaiah to cross the Jordan and third, when Jesus stopped the sun's movement through the heavens. Three incidents accepted as "miracles" by millions, not only violate the laws of nature but also would have destroyed the earth. I grant that scripture was written during a more primitive period but today we know that the world would have to stop spinning for one whole day and surely some culture, somewhere on this globe, would have reported it. Isn't the mere fact that we live on this ball and don't fall off while circling the sun at seventeen miles a second, enough of a miracle without having to rupture the fabric of nature? To me our existence alone seems proof enough of God's power without the need of any wild assertions. Still, as far as the Church is concerned, anomalies that *defy* nature seem to constitute Theological proof of the miraculous.

For example, Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, the trumpeter blew three blasts and you know what happened; stonewalls came tumbling down. Then the Lord joined the fray and hurled large boulders down from Heaven and the rocks God threw killed greater numbers than Joshua and his army combined. Precisely what is the miracle that the bible is trying to convey? Is it that a trumpet blast can crumble stonewalls or that God threw rocks down from heaven? Does God slay His own children to help Jewish invaders destroy a city and kill its inhabitants? Surely that can't be what makes this tale a miracle.

We have all seen that water follows natural law by seeking its own level. Does it ever run uphill? In every lake, sea, ocean or river does that precious fluid lie vertically or diagonally? Reality shows that water *always* lies horizontally and *never* defies gravity. That is the *real* miraculous nature of water. Obviously the very consistency of that liquid makes it a poor choice to impress pious minds

but nonetheless, piety has been given the “Parting of a river”. In this alleged “miracle” the waters parted, actually stood up on end creating a dry path in its center, then closed again upon it’s self. Why did scripture need such an awe-inspiring “miracle” that defies all reason and natural law just to let old Isaiah cross the Jordan?

Jonah made his home in the belly of a whale and survived without being digested by the mammal. Moses lived a long life and died at 127 years of age. Methuselah celebrated his 900th birthday and Noah sired his first son when he was 500 years old. His ark held two of every creature known to man. That certainly would be a miracle, especially if it happened today.

When ancient nomadic Hebrews traveled through the desert, bearers carried God Himself around in an ark while no one attended to the needs of the universe. One might wonder, with all the work the Lord had to do he would have little time for the mundane, yet while being carried about, Jehovah’s mind was filled with concerns like: All males must be must be circumcised and have Bar mitzvahs. The tribes must eat only food that was kosher. And is it reasonable to assume that God spent much of his days creating rules for “animal sacrifices and burnt offerings”?

All of these alleged miracles appear in the Old Testament but the New is not exempt from reporting events that ignore natural law. Eight days after the crucifixion, Jesus walks through a *closed* door, announces that he is *flesh* not *spirit* and dines on fish and honeycomb. A spirit, if one does exist, might be capable of passing through solid matter but it is doubtful that one could *eat* and digest matter without having to get rid of it. These kinds of anomalies are designed to create awe in gullible minds that fail to think things through. And in my opinion, turning water into wine as a miracle is beneath the dignity of a god who controls the movement of billions of galaxies.

The one aspect that should refute the theory of miracles is exorcism. Jesus “cured” the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leper and victims of the plague by casting out demons and unclean spirits from sick people that he believed were *possessed*. I find the Bible’s claim inconceivable that Christ believed in devils and spent so much energy fighting

figments of his imagination. Remnants of Christ's belief exist even today in deeply superstitious regions. Many an orthodox Christian has paid with his life for this practice. Christ may have believed that devils caused sickness but almost all thinking people today dispute this theory. The art of medicine has achieved many cures that were formerly considered impossible yet no divine claims were made. Much remains to be discovered in regard to health and although Science has given patients new lungs, kidneys, livers and artificial hearts made of plastic-no mention of miracles appears in their reports. Why these magnificent man made innovations have failed to make the religious community accept them as miracles shows the power of archaic beliefs.

And lastly, what is so miraculous about making man and animals out of mud? Wouldn't it more glorious to credit our Creator for inventing DNA; those tiny bits of self-perpetuating matter that keep all forms of life continuously reproducing? How does qualifying genetics as a natural process minimize the Lord's ingenious handiwork? Are the properties of mud superior to genes and chromosomes as the origin of life?

NATURAL MIRACLES

Now let's take a moment and compare what I consider natural miracles. Each of us is endowed with amazing qualities that we simply take for granted. Every creature is equipped with five remarkable sensory organs to ensure its survival. We barely acknowledge these senses until we happen to lose one. I always took my eyes for granted but failed to treasure my sight until two devastating strokes left me semi blind. I was an avid reader before the mishap but now it's a struggle to get through one page. Thanks to the computer I can make the letters large enough to write my books. In addition, age has begun to rob me of my hearing but I still consider myself fortunate to live at a time when Science has invented devices to help compensate for these losses. Now, I often think of the blind, the deaf, the lame and others who live with deficits, and I truly appreciate the gratitude they feel for those who create these aids. There was a time, not too long ago, when patients had no option but to endure their impairments. Prosthetics has made life more bearable for millions who experienced losses that were once considered irreparable. The accolades that I'm paying

may seem like a tribute to Science but they are actually intended as a wake-up call to those who fail to value the *natural* miracles that we all possess.

Consider for a moment what life would be like if we couldn't "smell the roses. Is it not miraculous that a tiny Olfactory nerve can bring so many odors to our awareness? Think of the magnificent bouquet of aromas that the sense of smell can perceive. Even foul odors help us avoid perilous situations like fires and smoke or toxic substances.

Our eyes also help us avoid danger while capturing the beauty of breathtaking sunsets with an array of gorgeous colors and scenery. The ability to read feeds the mind as well as the soul with literature, art, biographies and even the Internet. I believe we all agree that deprivation of sight would constitute a major loss. Can we deny that *vision* is miraculous?

To no longer hear the birds, the pounding surf or the voices of our loved ones would likewise be a painful loss. The function of hearing plays no small role in avoiding danger while adding immeasurably to our enjoyment of television and motion pictures. The absence of music would prove an immense deprivation to almost everyone the world over.

No words can express the emotional impact that would occur from losing the sense of *touch*. No longer to embrace or make love would rob life of incredible meaning. Being unable to recognize hot or cold could create hazards that might result in bodily harm or even death.

Lastly, one of the greatest pleasures in life resides in a row of tiny taste buds that line the tongue. When we savor delicious cuisine or bite into succulent fruits, we are rewarded with exquisite delights. Gourmets and gourmands in every society, salivate in ecstasy at the mere thought of some delicious repast. The sense of *taste* also plays a dual role and warns us of rancid foods or other toxic substances. Can you even imagine life without these natural miracles?

These five senses come built in as standard equipment which nature bestows upon the lowest life forms as well as the the highest. To my mind these bountiful gifts of nature *exceed* the miracles of scripture and provide more than

ample spiritual values for anyone capable of gratitude for being alive.

There many other *natural* wonders that should qualify as miracles. Religion has appropriated one in its attempt to woo man's mind. The "miracle" of *healing* is featured throughout the Bible but the body's ability to heal itself occurs even in the jungles to predators as well as some lucky prey. In the invisible world of microbes, many germs heal themselves by developing resistance to drugs that would otherwise destroy them. And how can we overlook the vast armies of antibodies that are marshaled within the bloodstream to repel invaders? It boggles the mind to realize that millions of leukocytes and macrophages, constantly battle pathogens that enter our systems. Some terminal diseases spontaneously go into remission without any apparent reason. Medical science has not yet discovered why this happens, but religion capitalizes on these cases by attributing them to faith. If praying to the biblical god is capable of curing diseases, who created them in the first place? Someday the answers will be common knowledge and then the scourge of cancer and other life threatening maladies will be conquered. Researchers have always encountered difficulties in discovering cures for diseases that some god created (or many believe it was Satan). History will never ignore Europe in 1605 when twenty million people, including the Clergy, died of small pox while they prayed to their gods. But the Lord never told them that the cause was rodent fleas and unsanitary conditions. Men had to discover that for themselves. Were it not for the natural miracle of healing, imagine what we would look like after a lifetime of bodily trauma. Even the beasts would make pitiful sights if their wounds failed to mend. Can we believe that some god heals their flesh only to have it devoured by predators? How can we not classify healing as a *natural* miracle?

Birth, growth, digestion, and even *belief* itself, cannot be discounted as *natural* miracles. Until we come to the realization that we are one with nature, we'll continue to take nature's blessings for granted. I'm convinced that people *want* magical explanations for the unusual so they turn to a god. But just because we don't understand something, why must we seek answers from something we understand even less? The scriptural use of the term

“Miracle” becomes patently clear. In order for something to qualify as a miracle, a fundamental law of nature must be broken, or at least, suspended. If that is *truly* the case then why didn’t a miracle deflect the bullets that killed Lincoln, Bobby and Jack Kennedy, Martin Luther King-and the youngsters at Columbine-during those unspeakable massacres that left our nation shocked and heartsick?

And finally the *natural* miracle of surgery that can repair numerous physical problems and undo some terrible birth defects that occur in the womb, like conjoin twins for example. Recalling the two boys from Guatemala that were born attached head to head, is there anyone among us who will still say, “What God has joined together let no man put asunder”?

A FINAL WORD

I think I can predict with some measure of certainty, what the outcome of this book will be. I will turn out to be the “bad guy”, considered the villain for trying to protect the image of God against the defamation of His goodness as presented in scripture. Those that accept the stories of His malevolent behavior will be the “good guys”, righteous and virtuous people who believe that God and the Bible are one and the same. Others may feel that I am trying to change their faith and tell them what to believe. That, of course, is not possible since most people don’t really know what they believe anyway because they believe what they already know, or think they do. Many have invested so much of themselves in what their parents taught them, which most of society condones, that my ideas would have little or no effect on their deepest convictions. Besides, it’s of no consequence to me what anyone believes because what has it to do with my life So let me be clear about one thing. This book is not trying to tell you what to believe about God, it’s simply showing you what you *do* believe.

Over the years the Bible has gone through numerous revisions yet the wrath and threats of the deities have never been mollified. I believe religion would remain just as effective if the violent portions of Scripture were expunged-and no harm would befall the faithful if the gods were portrayed with greater tolerance of man’s weakness by transcending the pettiness of their own “too human” emotions.

The scriptural depiction of the Jews as “God’s chosen people” offends the sensibilities of other ethnic groups and we know in our hearts that the Lord is not biased for we are all His children. And I think we would feel more kindly towards one another if the cruelty were culled from the text. We protest violence on television, violence in movies and even violence in computer games but does religion truly need a god that curses man, commits mass murder, destroys a countries, kills Egyptian babies, sends plagues that torment thousands, betrays the Hebrews and drowns their pursuers? And that’s mild compared to drowning the entire world because He repented creating man. How can anyone feel good being told that God believed man is evil? To make matters worse the Creator of the Universe is portrayed as an insecure, almost paranoid Supreme Being who believes in witches and is obsessed with “other gods”. At the very least, isn’t *some* of that text expendable?

And couldn’t the New Testament also be mollified so that a gentle and loving Being like Christ doesn’t frighten faithful Christians with the threat of Hell and Eternal Damnation? Since the Bible was created by men can’t it be modified by men even as the Bill of rights can?

I’m well past eighty now and fairly certain I won’t see ninety but I’d like more of a choice than Hell or Paradise when I leave. Now that we know the Bible was created by a vote of Emperor Constantine’s clergy, wouldn’t we all be better off if other options were offered? Or is the fear of what happens *after* death the glue that holds Religion together? I hope not because I believe better of God.

As a Deist I, have no fear or doubts of the way that life ends. I can bravely face the reality of ceasing to exist because the God of my heart comforts me by promising to provide a dark, starless night of nothingness when my visit is over.

APPENDIX I

The following appeared in the publication *Mature Living*:

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL WINCHELL, Author of “Protect God”.

Show business legend, Paul Winchell, shares his theological convictions in a magazine called Mature Living, revealing a side of

him not known to most fans of his great ventriloquist performances on television, radio and motion pictures.

1. Paul, most people from my era know your work as a ventriloquist. A smaller number of people, but still quite a few, know you as an inventor, particularly of the artificial heart. What most people don't know, is that you have created a very large number of original patents, became a practicing hypnotherapist, an acupuncturist, a pilot and a student of religions. What has driven you to embark on so many enterprises?

I think you are asking me- why did I become an over-achiever; because in some ways, that's exactly what I was. You might say, one of my main motivations was based on the fact that I was born to extremely unenlightened parents. My mother didn't really think much of me and constantly discouraged me. Perhaps I was always trying to vindicate myself to my folks. Nonetheless, many of the things I did were, in effect, quite fascinating. But still, I don't think that fact can diminish the motivation I had, like many others, to please my parents.

2. Most recently, you have focused your attention on a website called, "ProtectGod.com." This is an abridgement of a more complete book called "Protect God." And, I believe, you have written other books of a theological nature, over the last thirty or more years. What has taken you in this direction?

I guess I should begin by saying that I believe that the concept of God is a necessity for the human race. And, as I began to study the various religions of man, through their Scriptures, I found, particularly in the Jewish and Christian writings, a rather startling anomaly between the image of God that most people have and that which was conveyed through these writings. I mean, we always hear things- like God is kind, God is good, God Bless America, God bless our soldiers. We have a natural feeling for God's benevolence, but when you actually take a good look at the Scriptures- we don't really find kindness, understanding, compassion, wisdom or a nurturing figure. Instead we find a predominance of emotions like wrath, jealousy, rage, a sense of paranoia, and insecurity. Those are the attributes of God described in Scripture. This to me is a terrible paradox. We all need to have a clear idea of what God is. And the portrait of God that is depicted in Scripture certainly doesn't take us in that direction.

3. *Isn't that similar to some of the thinking of the Founding Fathers?*

Yes, people like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson certainly had an image of God that they believed in. It just wasn't the God of the Bible. It was, however, a concept of God, that men could cling to and trust. These men were serious about their concept of the Almighty. It just wasn't Biblical.

4. *Is there a route to knowing this God?*

Definitely. I believe that man has a basic need to reach out to God- in his loneliness, in his suffering and in times of despair. This is what differentiates us from the animals that do not operate with reason, but with instinct. I believe, for human beings, God is within us. And whether we look at Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Chaldean, and Roman- whatever ancient or modern cultures we observe, we see a basic search for God- to combat the despair and darkness we all live in. This is true of every culture, but even more so for primitive man who lived in a hostile world of dangerous animals, quicksand, earthquakes, poisonous berries, lightening, etc.- all those things which would tend to foster superstition and make man reach out for help.

Incidentally, I believe that people also need the concept of heaven. Whether objective or not, this concept allows people to face life and to be able to experience death. It seems very natural for man to wish that a better world exists somewhere than the one we live in, which is filled with wars, murder, rape and suicide.

5. *Do you believe that the original teachings of Judaism or Christianity have been textually altered or edited? If so, what do you suppose the original manuscripts would be like?*

Yes, I think a lot of editing probably took place. I think these writings have been revised over and over again, by a number of people. Remember, there was no printing before Ben Franklin and every copy of Scripture had to be done by hand. Basically, I think Scripture is a collection of folk tales, compiled and edited over hundreds of years. I believe the original manuscripts were probably more primitive. Thousands of years ago there was no electricity and when people huddled together at night around fires or even read by candlelight, the world they lived in easily yielded grotesque shadows and unruly shapes. Such illusions lead to

fostering imaginative images that were frightening, yet very real. This is the world of very early Scripture.

If you look at the teachings of Jesus, you see something new under the sun, something substantially different from Mosaic Law. Even if Jesus was Jewish, he spoke of a loving God, a very different God from the one that killed the children of the Egyptians, drowned the world in a gigantic flood, angrily destroyed those who accidentally touched the tabernacle and massacred women and children who followed other gods. Whatever Christ meant by "Our Father", he taught the world something that was much more benign than the God of Moses.

Let me repeat these important words about Jesus that I used before: "A Being of such great love and compassion who forgave Sinners during life does not become a tyrant after death and pursue them beyond the grave to damn them to Hell". So I think the original teachings of Jesus may have been very favorable. But obviously, they became polluted over the centuries.

6. *Tell us something of your investigations of the various religions of the world. What specifically did you do to try to understand about them?*

I went to Buddhist temples and talked with Buddhist monks; I got involved with various Hindu groups; I prostrated myself on prayer rugs in mosques and I genuflected and took communion in Catholic churches because I wanted to understand. Wherever I went, I respected the beliefs of those that I worshipped with. When I studied with a group of Krishna followers in Los Angeles, I found their very interesting museum to be in considerable disarray. I made a generous donation to help them present their religion to the world. They were very grateful and I found them, in general, to be very sincere in their devotions. I gave all of these religions my full attention and consideration, talked with their priests and followers and investigated their literature very carefully.

7. *What kind of motivation or profit would some person or group of people derive from tampering with Scripture?*

Of course you realize that money plays a big part in all religions. In fact, religion is one of the most successful enterprises in the world. It all boils down to- money and power. The money often flows best the more complete the mind control. And the stories of religion often serve to strengthen the priesthood.

8. *The findings at Nag Hammadi, with their discovery of twenty-two papyri, which contained many lost gospels, like the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Thomas, points to a gigantic suppression of certain religious literature. What does that imply for the level of our existing knowledge of the Early Church?*

For centuries those that controlled the Church used threats plus the penalties of death and torture to persuade people to follow their doctrines. With a history like the Crusades and the Inquisitions, it is not surprising that much of the history of the early church was obscured and its documents destroyed or hidden.

9. *What drives people to take on one or another religious belief, throwing away the necessity for reasoning or deduction from proven facts- either historically or in their experience?*

Generally speaking, religion is a kind of hypnotic phenomena, with the parent as the hypnotist and the child as the subject. This way a belief system is passed from generation to generation, in effect, unquestioningly. And that is probably one of the reasons, religion, when discussed, leads to such hot tempers. When you question someone's religious convictions, it feels like you are challenging his or her parents' beliefs. And, for centuries, parents- and ancestors, in general- have been held in high reverence.

10. *Can a person be deprogrammed from fearing God in an irrational way, and can one do this by him self?*

I hope so. But I think it is very difficult. One has to try to reconstruct the image of God that has been planted in his unconscious by parents and by various institutions. Only new and compelling information can alter any belief.

11. *What kind of religious upbringing did you have and how has this influenced your theological investigations?*

My upbringing was Orthodox Jewish, but it was laced with a lot of superstitious nonsense, like about golems and dybbuks, evil spirits discussed in Jewish folklore. These monsters literally tore children to shreds. Naturally, this made me ultimately question the image of God that permitted these worlds to exist, including the Biblical stories I was told as a child. I was also threatened with Hell and Eternal Damnation, which is no part of Judaism.

12. How do you hope people will profit from your writing on theological subjects and, once they have assessed the substance of your book, what do they do from there?

I hope it helps a great many people who are fearful of God, raise questions in their mind as to the reality of their beliefs and begin on their path to intellectual and emotional freedom. However, it is essential to understand that *true* freedom of Religion must include freedom *from* Religion.

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